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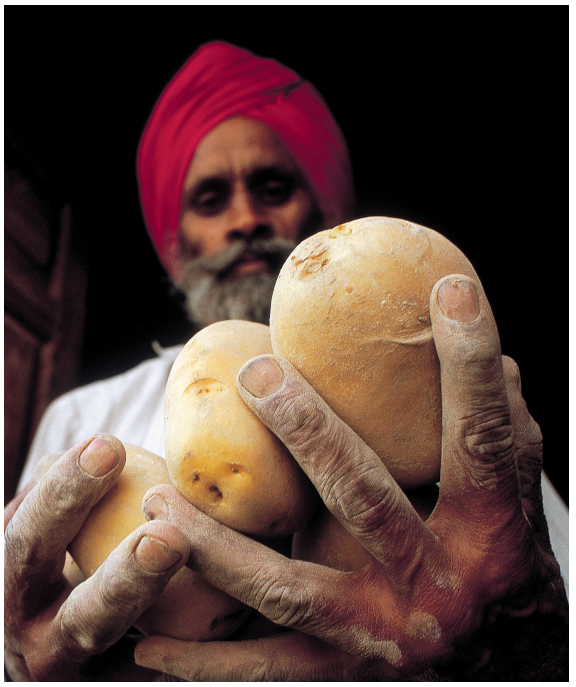

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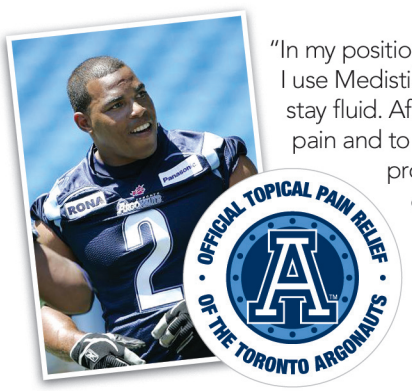

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by Stacy Malkin

not just

As if there weren't enough concerns about the toxicity of cosmetic chemicals, manufacturers are rushing to incorporate nanotechnology that uses particles 80,000 times smaller than the width of a human hair... in one of the most dramatic failures of regulation since the introduction of asbestos.

With no safety framework and little government oversight, the cosmetics industry is operating in a virtual Wild West. And the West has gotten wilder still.

As if there weren't enough concerns about the toxicity of cosmetic chemicals, manufacturers are rushing to incorporate nanotechnology that uses particles 80,000 times smaller than the width of a human hair. Nanotechnology has been touted as the next revolution in cosmetics and packaging. However nanoparticles, being so tiny, have the potential to penetrate unusually deeply into the skin and organs, causing exotic physical effects.

Animal studies show that some nanoparticles can penetrate cells and tissues, move through the body and brain and cause biochemical damage. As one example, carbon fullerenes – also called buckyballs, and currently being used in some moisturizers – can cause brain damage in fish, and even low levels of exposure can be toxic to human liver cells. The health impacts of nanomaterials in cosmetics and sunscreens remain largely unknown, pending completion of long-range studies that have only recently begun. But that's not stopping the cosmetics industry from leading the charge to incorporate the inadequately tested technology into products we put on our faces and in our hair.

"In one of the most dramatic failures of regulation since the introduction of asbestos, corporations around the world are rapidly introducing thousands of tons of nanomaterials into the environment and onto the faces and hands of hundreds of millions of people, despite the growing body of evidence indicating that nanomaterials can be toxic for humans and the environment," said a May 2006 report by Friends of the Earth. The group filed the first-ever legal challenge on the potential health impacts of nanotechnology in a 2006 petition to FDA, demanding that the agency monitor and regulate nano-particles in cosmetics.

Hundreds of personal care products already contain nano-sized ingredients and thousands more contain ingredients that are available in nano form but don't include information about particle size on the labels, according to a *Skin Deep* analysis. Since nano-sized ingredients are absorbed differently into the body, they require separate safety studies. But as Jane Houlihan noted, "Manufacturers seem to be following the pattern they established with conventional chemical ingredients – put poorly tested chemicals into personal care products and do the science later, if at all."

The by-now familiar debate about cosmetics safety played out in the press coverage of the Friends of the Earth petition, as illustrated in a San Francisco *Chronicle* story. "I don't think there's anything to worry about," Dr. John Bailey from the cosmetics industry trade association told the *Chronicle*. "All of the safety questions have been answered…" he said. FDA spokeswoman Susan Cruzan said the agency has no evidence that nanoparticles in products pose hazards. Revlon and L'Oréal did not respond to the reporter's calls seeking comment. Estée Lauder spokeswoman Janet Bartucci said the company would review the Friends of the Earth report, and gave assurances that "… consumer safety has always been a top priority at the Estée Lauder Companies." Lisa Archer from Friends of the Earth said she thinks corporations should "… stop treating their customers like guinea pigs" by putting nano-particles into personal care products before the materials are proven safe.

In the absence of federal regulations, some cities are trying to get a handle on the situation. Berkeley, California, became the first city to regulate nanotechnology in December 2006 and other cities may follow suit. Under the Berkeley law, companies and research labs that make or use nanoparticles must disclose that fact to the city government, and provide information about known health or safety risks.

What Should I Buy?

"Just tell me which ingredients to avoid." It's the most common reaction people have upon hearing about the toxic cosmetic problem. Naturally, everyone wants the quick fix, the easy shopping list. But unfortunately, it doesn't exist. "The list of chemicals we know are toxic or contaminated is already too long for anyone to do an easy label check at the store," according to Alex Gorman, director of science and research at Women's Voices for the Earth. "And there are so many that should be on the list purely because we don't know anything about them. I wish I had more advice on this because I've struggled with it before and have never come up with a satisfying answer for folks asking the question." The ultimate answer, she said, is changing the law to require cosmetics companies to use the safest ingredients possible.

Until then, consumers can make more educated choices by using the *Skin Deep* database [www.cosmeticdatabase.com] and many are. The database gets about one million product searches per month. With its 2007 update, *Skin Deep* now offers brand-by-brand comparisons of more than 30,000 products, about one third of the market. "It's been such a great tool," Jane Houlihan said. "People use it to shop. Companies are using it to reformulate." She never could have

a pretty face

The side effects of cosmetic chemicals

guessed… that her database would be such a lightening rod, nor did she know it would be a never-ending project.

"We'll be updating it every year," Jane said, "… always pulling the latest toxicity databases, always adding more products." The staff at EWG – now including a chemist and medical doctor – continue to plug in new information, guided by a simple vision that is not so simple to carry out in the real world: "I want to walk into any store, anywhere and buy any product without having to worry if it's safe for my wife and kids," said staffer Sean Gray.

Getting there will take more than a database. *Skin Deep* is "… the beginnings of something empowering," said EWG staffer Hema Subramanian. "But how impossible is it for a mom with three kids on her arm to try to look everything up on a database and remember ingredients in the store? How do you make good choices without enough information out there?" Her experience with *Skin Deep* has made her a true believer in the need to reform government policies. "This is too overwhelming for a staff of five in a nonprofit with a $3 million budget," she said. "There's too much responsibility placed outside of government. Companies need to be required to do more work on the front end to make products safer."

Skin Deeper Still

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Excerpted from Not Just a Pretty Face: the Ugly Side of the Beauty Industry *Copyright © 2007 by Stacy Malkin, New Society Publishers. Stacy Malkin is communications director of Health Care Without Harm and cofounder of the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, www.safecosmetics.org*

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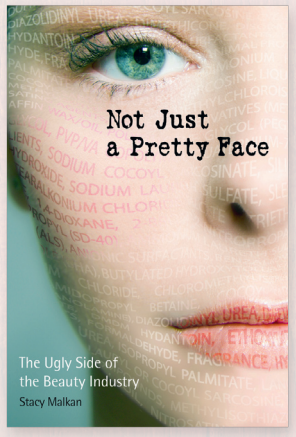

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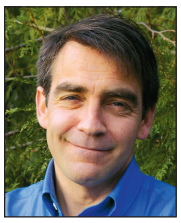

Pharmaspeak

HEALTH

Tricks to make drugs sound effective

DRUG BUST *Alan Cassels*

The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein proposed, "The limits of my language mean the limits of my world," an intriguing proposition, begging the question: "Do our words shape the way we think about things?"

It's a question at the centre of a 50-year-old, controversial hypothesis, initiated when the concept of "linguistic determinism" hit the scientific world. You can't deny that words shape our experiences and that there are some situations, such as our health, where precision in how we use words is indescribably important. Does the carelessness with which we sometimes speak affect how we think and what we expect from our physicians and our healthcare system?

I was reminded of this burning question by Dr. Ralph Fagotter, a friend and family physician in South Australia. He runs a busy general practice but finds time to tend several acres of ginkgo biloba trees and philosophize on his little plantation north of Adelaide. He takes the time to think deeply about medicine and his own place in it. Writing in a late-night email last month, he asked, "Imagine what it would be like if the word kilometre meant 100 metres when used in one context and 1,000 metres when used in another context?"

Ralph continued: "Well, there would be public outrage at the stupidity and disastrous imprecision of it all wouldn't there? An expert committee would quickly be appointed to redefine and clarify the meaning of the word kilometre and everyone would have to accept the standard meaning." What is implied, of course, is that confusion would reign and we simply couldn't live in the resulting chaos of double meanings.

Yet Ralph's late-night monologue invoked the fact that we do this in the medical world all the time, changing the meaning assigned to the same word. If I were to stand on a street corner in Victoria and ask a sample of people walking by to tell me what an "effective" drug is, they might say, "Oh, it's something that works" or that "It works much of the time." If I were to go further and ask them to quantify what this means, I expect most people would say, "Well, it works between 80 to 90 percent of the time." In other words, effective to them means most of the time.

But, as Ralph reminded me, when you step from there into a hospital or a doctor's clinic and find out how medical people define the word effective, you're in for a surprise. As a doctor, he's immersed in a world that sees effectiveness defined not as something that works most of the time, but something that is statistically probable: it didn't happen by chance 19 times out of 20 as the media likes to report. This is called the "95 percent confidence interval," which means that if you were to do the same experiment 20 times, you can be confident you'll get a similar result, plus or minus a few percentage points, 19 times.

In medical research, we try to determine the discrepancies between what we expect and what we observe when we give a drug to people. To do this, we take a group of similar people and randomly assign a drug to some and a placebo – an inactive substance – to others. Then we watch and wait. At the end of the study, we determine if those in the drug group did better or worse than those in the placebo group. And if the observed differences are statistically significant, we deem the treatment effective. But that doesn't tell us *how* effective it is.

What we really need to know is how strong that effect is. In other words, did it help one person in 10 (10 percent), one person in 100 (1.0 percent) or one in a thousand (0.1 percent)? Let's look at a couple of examples to see how effective a drug deemed effective really is.

Taken daily, cholesterol-lowering drugs will lower your risk of a heart attack or stroke. But how effective are they? The most impressive benefits are found with the cholesterol-lowering drug simvastatin (Zocor), initially studied in 4,444 Scandinavians with established heart disease. Of the people on placebo, 8.5 percent of them died of a heart attack over 5.4 years. For those who took the drug, only five percent died of a heart attack. A difference of 3.5 percent. For most cholesterol drugs, in this high risk population the best you could hope for is about a one to three percent difference. Who wouldn't swallow an effective, breakthrough drug to prevent heart attacks if you thought it worked 80 to 90 percent of the time? The fact it only *works* (i.e. prevents you from dying of a heart attack) only three and a half percent of the time is the version of effectiveness the drug companies don't want you to see. That's why you rarely see it.

Hmm. Ninety percent versus 3.5 percent? Is this really true?

There are many other tricks to make that effectiveness of drugs sound impressive. If you take alendronate (Fosamax), the most frequently prescribed drug for osteoporosis, you can be excused for thinking it lowered your risk of a hip fracture by 50 percent. That's what the ads targeted to doctors claimed. Fifty percent is a most impressive claim,

Who wouldn't swallow an effective, breakthrough drug to prevent heart attacks if you thought it worked 80 to 90 percent of the time? The fact it only works (i.e. prevents you from dying of a heart attack) only three and a half percent of the time is the version of effectiveness the drug companies don't want you to see.

which means that half the women taking it will benefit. One in two. Not bad, eh?

If you look closer at the actual study, you find that for women on placebo, two women out of a hundred had a hip fracture (two percent). In the women on Fosamax, one woman out a hundred (one percent) had a hip fracture. In other words, you can lower your risk of hip fracture from two percent to one percent, an impressive 50 percent reduction. But 50 percent sounds impressive even though it is really only a one percent difference; that is, only one woman out of a hundred taking the drug saw any benefit. The company can promote this drug legally as being "significant" and "effective," when, in fact, 99 percent of the women who took that drug had no effect whatsoever. They wasted their money, exposed themselves to the adverse effects of the drug and saw no benefit.

We often also see the misuse of the word "significant." We'll hear about a drug having a "significant effect over placebo" and we think that it works a lot better than nothing, right? But the word significant is also used to mean statistically significant, meaning, as we have seen, that the difference couldn't have happened by chance. But that doesn't mean it works.

When the first major drug for Alzheimer's disease hit the market, the VP of research and development for the company stated, "Aricept represents a significant step forward in addressing the therapeutic needs of the Alzheimer's disease community." But did that mean the drug worked? Not at all. When the drug was tested in three randomised, controlled trials against placebo in patients with Alzheimer's disease, the differences, deemed statistically significant in the cognitive scores, was three points out of a total of 70.

Did that three-point difference mean anything to those people? Did it help them live independently? Not at all. In fact, despite the average improvement of three points, caregivers (e.g. spouses) could not discern any difference. In other words, these drug effects can be shown to be statistically significant, but the effects are ultimately meaningless. Doctors, therefore, are routinely exposing the elderly to these drugs which do nothing to improve their lives while causing significant side effects; more than 10 percent of the patients on the drugs experienced nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea. That's the result of imprecise language – the results of our confusion.

Whenever you hear someone say a new drug is effective and the results of the study are statistically significant, ask that person if they are using the medical use of the words or the everyday way we think of those concepts.

So how long is a kilometre? Can it be 100 metres one moment and 1,000 metres the next? Of course not. So don't let this happen when talking about effective or significant drugs. The result is that people are hopelessly and sometimes utterly confused as to the power of the medicine they're taking, thinking a drug is much more powerful than it is. We waste money on those drugs, expose people to side effects and eschew more natural treatments.

These drug effects can be shown to be statistically significant, but the effects are ultimately meaningless.

So throughout 2008, let's all practise more precision in our language. If your doctor tells you something is effective, ask him how effective it is over placebo and ask him to spell it out in precise, numerical terms. Ask how that drug's effects compare to the rates of side effects and likely adverse effects and so on.

In other words, make sure you and your doctor are speaking the same language because, if not, you might think the goal is 100 metres away when it's actually 1,000.

Alan Cassels is a pharmaceutical policy researcher at the University of Victoria and frequent commentator on prescription drug issues. He is author of a new book, The ABCs of Disease Mongering: An Epidemic in 26 Letters *(Emdash, 2007).*

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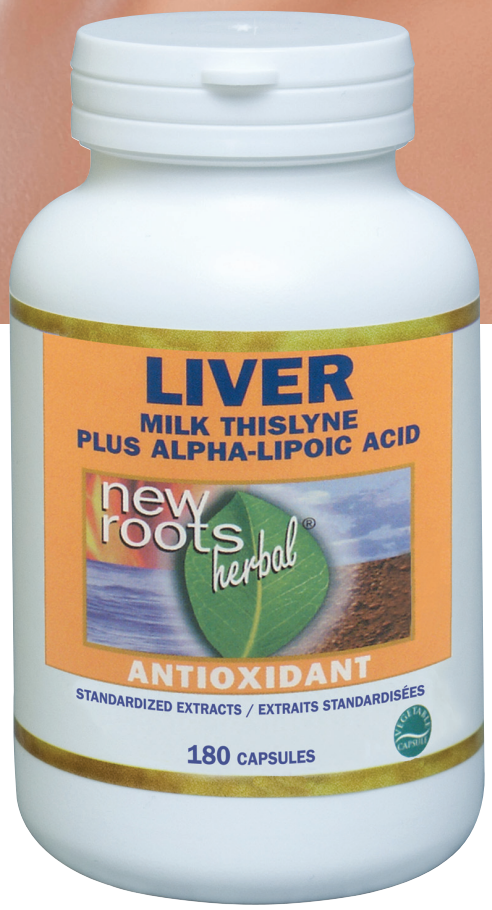

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PREVENTION & CURE

Mastering mindful eating

NUTRISPEAK Vesanto Melina MS, RD and Vrinda Walker

Here we are again. It's that time of year when we feel the aftermath of our holiday overindulgence and panic sets in. When we try to detect our "tight abs," we discover they are hidden by even more layers of fat. We scour the supermarket checkout stands for the newest, quick-fix diet. We sign up for gym memberships and fitness classes, with a nagging memory of how we typically drop out a month later.

There are effective solutions, however. Let's make 2008 the year that we opt for a sustainable approach to healthy eating by connecting with our body before and while we eat. Let's master portion control all year long.

When we eat mindlessly, we aren't thinking about what or how much we consume. Rather, we unconsciously empty our plates of whatever is in front of us. Our mind and body are disconnected. We lose touch with the body sensations of eating and enjoying food. With the habit of mindless eating, we fail to recognize our body's signals of satiety. Portions can spiral out of control without our awareness. This produces a disharmonious, relationship with food, rather than a nourishing one.

Unconscious eating can be linked with many factors: the dimensions of food packages, the wording of labels, the size of our plate, the lighting and our social environment, according to Cornell University's researcher Brian Wansink, author of *Mindless Eating: Why We Eat More Than We Think* (Bantam Books, trade paperback, 2007, hardcover, 2006). Wansink's brilliantly designed studies show that whatever we believe about our actions, the truth is that we guzzle more when we drink from a wide glass, eat a greater number of candies when the dish is on our desk instead of six feet away and, after an initial cringe, nibble away absently on stale popcorn. (See www.mindlesseating.org)

If we could eat a bucket of stale popcorn without noticing, we might as well enlist our intelligence as a health ally in the planning stages. Ensure that what's close at hand to nibble on is a platter of colourful raw veggies, washed and precut, or other good choices that fit our nutritional goals.

In 2008, we can overcome mindless eating by adopting a reverse approach: mindful eating. This ancient practice focuses on being proactive and making conscious food choices. We can once regain power and build a healthy relationship with food. There are many ways to practice mindful eating so choose ideas that feel right for you. Here are some tips.

- Explore why you are eating. Is it really for hunger?
- Visualize the portion that you are about to eat.
- Become aware of the amount you actually eat.
- Take time to eat slowly, breathe deeply and savour each bite.
- Listen for your body's signals that you are full. They appear about 20 minutes after you begin to eat.
- Eat only until you are satisfied.

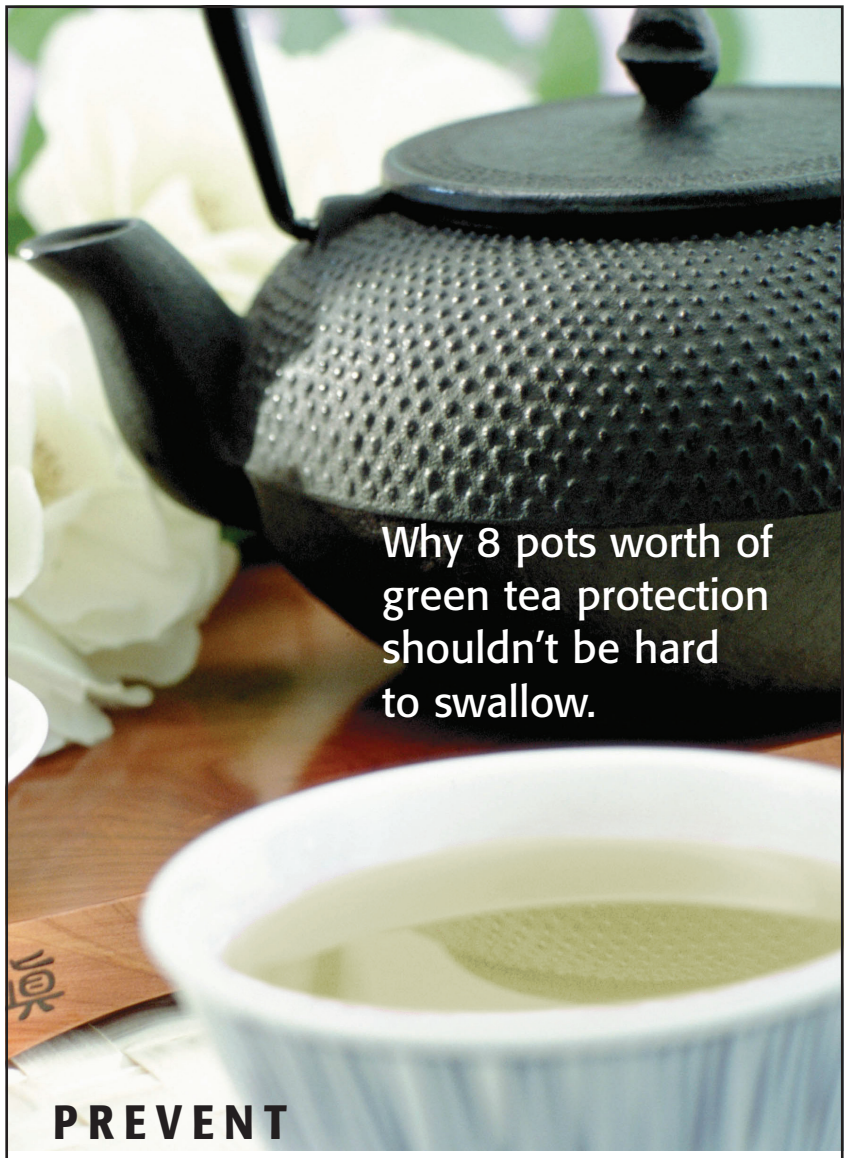
In 2008, we can overcome mindless eating by adopting a reverse approach: mindful eating.

Start small; pick one meal each day to try mindful eating. If lunch is hectic at work, choose dinner at home when you can relax. Or start your day right by practicing at breakfast. Once you start enjoying the benefits of mindful eating, you can implement the concept of mindfulness while grocery shopping, cooking and exercising. The possibilities are limitless. All you need to do is slow down and take the time to enjoy!

For simple, nutritionally adequate menus, see *Becoming Vegan* by Brenda Davis and Vesanto Melina, The Book Publishing Company, 2000 (pages 156-161; 206-217) and *Becoming Vegetarian* by Vesanto Melina and Brenda Davis, Wiley Canada, 2003 (pages 92-95; chapters 9 and 11).

If you're going to be conscious about what you consume, it makes sense to invest in top quality, organic produce from www.ladybugorganics.com or other sources of community supported agriculture. For practical inspiration in a supportive environment, enjoy a meal at Radha restaurant, 728 Main St. in Vancouver.

Vesanto Melina is a dietitian and author of nutrition classics; she consults from her home office in Langley. www.nutrispeak.com, 604-882-6782. Vrinda Walker, who assisted with this article, is a dietetic intern and a personal fitness trainer at Kitsilano Fitness World (Broadway & Arbutus).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PREVENTION & CURE

The inner dinner party and the Power of Now

by Joanne Sales

Imagine that you sit down at your table at a dinner party. Immediately, the person next to you begins to tell you the details of living with his ex-wife. At first, you listen. Then you nod. Then, you glance around and look for an escape. You're stuck. Your other table neighbour is complaining about taxes and traffic. The couple across the table is planning a trip to Barbados. At one end of the table, you're witnessing a temper tantrum; at the other end, a nervous breakdown. "Excuse me, I need to use the…"

Merciless rants at a party are painful to witness, but easy to escape. But what if the relentless ranting is going on inside your own head? A young woman's brother spends a lot of time in mental institutions. "He hears voices," she tells me. I ask her, "Don't you hear voices?"

"Of course," she answers.

"So do I," I affirm.

Finally, we recognize the difference between her brother and the rest of us. Her brother believes the voices. "Oh." We are both humbled for we have to acknowledge that we too have the nagging habit of believing the voices that speak inside our heads. Those voices are our opinions and cherished beliefs. Recognizing how close we are to "clinically insane" adds a personal touch to the bumper sticker: "Don't believe everything you think."

I guess we could take some comfort in knowing that we live in a society of people dominated by inner voices. But we have our escapes, don't we? We can overwork, overeat, get drunk, watch TV, go shopping, read the news, complain, get a divorce, etc. But these things only cover up the rant. They don't bring peace to the voices.

What are all these voices and why don't they just shut up? How do we bring peace to the inner dinner party of the mind? This is the subject of the teachings of Eckhart Tolle, author of the *New York Times* bestseller, the *Power of Now*. I went to see him on November 30, in Vancouver, along with 2,300 friends at *Common Ground's* 25th anniversary celebration at Canada Place. There wasn't much noise in the Vancouver Convention Centre room that evening. To some degree, his inner quiet quieted our own minds.

When we become conscious in the present moment, we find out that we don't have to spend our lives as victims of our inner static.

How can anyone condense the wisdom of *being in the now* into a few paragraphs? The wise ones of every tradition have been addressing our "out of control" minds since the beginning of time so I won't even try.

The Coasters said it so well way back in the 50s: "Yakety yak yakety yak... Take out the papers and the trash, or you don't get no spendin' cash... Just tell your hoodlum friend outside. You ain't got time to take a ride... Yakety yak – Don't talk back..."

Enough said about the inner dialogues between the multitudes of me. We know the problem. Here's the good news, as Tolle presents it: If, and when, we become conscious in the present moment, we find out that we don't have to spend the rest of our lives as victims of our inner static. We aren't the mental dinner party. Nor do we have to stay there. The power of "now" is that, if we actually take up a chair, and listen to the ranting dinner guests, consciously and peacefully, eventually, they go away. We find that, in the present, in the stillness, that our nature is actually quite benevolent, kind, loving and peaceful. The dinner party chaos is a mere smokescreen covering our own Higher Nature.

At this moment in history, becoming conscious may be the most effective survival strategy for the human race and Earth as we know it.

Joanne Sales is an organic blueberry farmer, writer and teacher in Qualicum Beach. joanne@glasswing.com, www.joannesales.com

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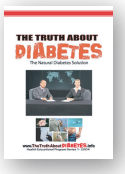

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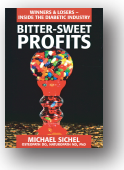

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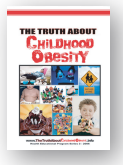

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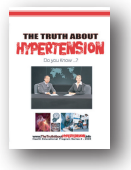

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HEALTH

Codex
Time bomb for natural health

The 29th session of the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses, held at Bad Neuenahr, Germany, ended on Friday, November 16, 2007, following a week of deliberations.

This Codex committee, more than any other, is deciding the fate of international principles, guidelines and standards affecting natural health products and health claims. The US-based, international non-governmental organization (INGO), the National Health Federation (NHF), was the only INGO present representing consumers' rights to freedom of choice in healthcare and its three-person delegation was responsible for more interventions during the course of the meetings than all other INGOs put together.

The NHF and its European partner organization, the Alliance for Natural Health (ANH), have long argued that risk assessment of nutrients could pose one of the greatest threats to the future availability of food supplements used for the purpose of promoting health by millions of people around the world. The ANH has recently released a position paper that demonstrates major flaws in proposed risk-assessment and risk-management procedures, which, unless modified, will result in the European Commission setting, within the next two years, excessively low maximum permitted levels for food supplements to be sold throughout the European Union. This paper demonstrated that, for example, the maximum permitted beta-carotene level in supplements could be less than that found in two carrots, while that for selenium could be less than that found in two Brazil nuts.

Paul Anthony Taylor, Chairman of the NHF, and one of the three members on the NHF delegation in Bad Neuenahr, said, "Although we made some important interventions during the Electronic Working Group... it is worrying to see how fast the Committee's host country, Germany, is wanting to finalize a document that details the principles to be used by the Committee in its work on risk assessment. They got the document to "Step 5" of the eight-step procedure this meeting, and, once finalized, it will be included in the Codex Procedural Manual. This could happen as early as the next session of the committee, due to be held in November 2008 in South Africa. What's particularly worrying for all of us working to protect health freedom is that the principles run so tightly with the approach used in Europe, which has itself been heavily influenced by the ultra-cautionary Federal Risk Assessment Institute in Germany, the very organization from which the Codex committee's chairman, Dr. Rolf Grossklaus, hails."

Another key issue dealt with at the Codex committee's last session was the development of internationally agreed-upon Nutrient Reference Values (NRVs), which would establish the daily amounts of particular vitamins and minerals required by adults and infants. Speaking about one of the NHF's many interventions during the meeting, Scott Tips, both president and legal counsel for the NHF as well as its Codex delegation head, said, "The Committee noted in its report our intervention suggesting that there should be an additional NRV for adults, one that caters to population groups with the greatest need. We were demonstrating that an average value simply doesn't work. For example, in the case of iron, most children need extra iron in supplementary form as do menstruating women. But most adult men do not; indeed, it is unhealthy for most men.

Codex is now at the mercy of politics and economics, more than it is to science... a passport system for big business.

"If we could have at least one extra category, we could cater to the higher amounts required by pre-menopausal women rather than them having to accept the fact that half the population, in this case men, lower the value of the average that is then imposed on all adults. The bad news was that, despite the logic of this, and the fact that the intervention was recorded in the final report of the meeting, the Committee did not accept it. Codex, as so often happens, trundles on regardless of the needs of particular population groups who don't fit the law of averages."

Dr. Robert Verkerk, scientific advisor to the NHF and executive and scientific director of the ANH, indicated that this was a critical time to re-appraise the principles and methods applied to and in risk assessment. "This area of risk assessment is really the ticking time bomb for natural health," said Dr. Verkerk. "It's high time that we see some top academic groups contributing to this rapidly developing field, which is now at the mercy of politics and economics, more than it is to science. You can't expect regulators lacking a thorough grasp of the science to get it right, particularly when pressure by large food and pharmaceutical interests is pushing for such low nutrient dosages that they could never be used for health-promotion purposes. Governments need to recognize that health promotion using foods and food-based ingredients, in conjunction with modified lifestyles, is the new, sustainable paradigm in healthcare."

The NHF also intervened at one point to make the argument that NRVs should reflect the fact that the nutrient levels in soils had been greatly depleted over the last 50 years, as confirmed by a major UK study which analyses government records over this period. The Chairman of the Codex Committee, though, strongly disagreed with the NHF position, saying that a German study had stated otherwise. NHF responded that both US and Canadian studies had also confirmed the UK study. The Chairman refused to let the report reflect this intervention by NHF.

Another crucial agenda item of contention was the scientific basis of health claims. Just as with risk assessment, the progress of the meeting confirmed that Codex is running parallel with recent European legislation, in this case the Nutrition & Health Claims Regulation, which came into effect across the EU on July 1, 2007. In order to substantiate health claims, there is a real risk that health claims will require evidence from randomized controlled trials, which are prohibitively expensive for all but the largest food corporations. Furthermore, the NHF and other INGOs argued that observational evidence where this was of a high quality should suffice in place of randomised controlled trials, as the latter were unable to yield accurate results given that control groups could not be deprived of nutrients.

The NHF continues to be deeply concerned that the scientific requirements are being set deliberately high to exclude smaller companies, which have, in fact, been the pioneers in the area of health and functional foods. Dr. Verkerk echoed his concerns about the European legislation, indicating that the system under consideration in Codex, just like the current EU model, is a "passport system for big business," with Scott Tips adding, "This plays into the hands of those proponents of big government who dream of having the power to control every aspect of our lives."

For further information on Codex, please visit the NHF website (Codex): www.thenhf.com/codex.html

Little pea secrets

ON THE GARDEN PATH *Carolyn Herriot*

ORGANICS

Peas have long been a popular garden vegetable, perhaps because they are one of the earliest vegetables harvested in spring. The Victorians grew over 120 different varieties of garden peas, providing a continuous supply of fresh shelled peas throughout the summer months. The Victorians may have delighted in afternoons spent shelling peas, but these days we're all on the run, so most gardeners grow snow peas or snap peas – no shelling required!

Peas fall into three categories: shelling, snow and snap. Snow peas are edible pod peas harvested when the pods are full-sized and the peas have just begun to swell. With snap peas, also known as Mangetout, the sweet, tender pods and fully-formed peas are eaten.

Pea varieties vary from two-foot dwarf vines that require no staking, to eight-foot tall climbing vines, which require good support for ease of growth and harvest.

Tip: Use pea sticks for support; for example, long, straight, twiggy branches of pruned apple trees. "Plant" two rows of pea sticks about two feet apart; push them deep into the ground with their tops crossed and tied for extra support.

For the highest yields, grow peas in rows. Moist, well-drained fertile soil in a sunny location, with a pH of 6.0 to 6.5, makes peas happy. Avoid heavy applications of manure or you'll get lush foliage but few peas. The fastest way to plant peas is to hoe a shallow furrow and drop pea seeds into it, one inch deep and one inch apart. Then just rake over to cover, and water in.

Peas are legumes. Leguminous plants allow bacteria to live on their roots, and, in return, the bacteria convert nitrogen from the air into usable nitrogen for the peas. When an excess of nitrogen is produced, it goes into the soil where it becomes available to the plants.

If sowing peas where no legumes have grown before, you can significantly increase yields by coating the seeds with fresh inoculant when seeding. This provides the bacteria for this mutually beneficial relationship that enhances plant growth. It's as easy as shaking the pea seeds with the black powdery inoculant in a container before sowing.

As long as the soil is moist there's no need to soak pea seeds. In fact, if you grow peas in wet soil, it's best not to soak them at all, as they rot so easily. Germination is fast: peas sprout in six to 14 days, depending on soil temperature. They will germinate at between five and 23°C (40-75°F), but they germinate best at between 10 and 20°C (50-70°F). You can expect yields approximately 100 days from sowing, depending on the variety you are growing.

On the West Coast, we get pea enation disease, spread by green aphids, which causes pea vines to yellow and die. Plant enation-resistant varieties if you are planting peas later in the spring when aphids are at work. Peas perform best in cool growing conditions; the yields drop for sowings later in the year, so it's best to start them as early as possible. Some gardeners plant peas in July and August for a fall crop, but I find the yields never as good as with the spring planting.

Once peas start producing, harvest them every day to keep them producing. Pinching the tips off will cause the vines to bush out, increasing yields as well as giving you delicious, juicy pea shoots for stirfries and salads.

Like corn, peas are sweetest when eaten fresh, as once harvested their sugars turn to starch. If you miss the boat when harvesting, leave the peas on the vines to mature until the pods are brown and dried. Then save the seeds for next year's crop, or keep some as dried peas for hearty winter soups.

Tip: If short of space, try growing a mixed pea patch. Sowing several varieties of peas together that mature at different times will extend your season of harvest.

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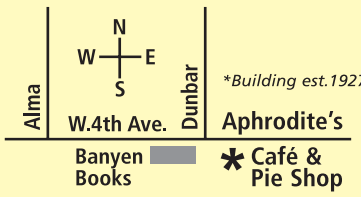

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INSPIRATION

Belonging are you in or out?

by Victoria Castle

Chances are you're a master at reading situations to see where and how you can belong. It's hardwired into us as human beings. Of all the mammals on earth, we spend the greatest length of time dependent on others. Our survival depends on our being included, cared for and accepted so that we belong in our tribe. We get very good at noticing how we must behave in order to be included. Even when we've moved past the risk of biological need, we remain watchful: "Am I in or out?" Teenagers experience this questioning particularly intensely; that's probably why very few of us would want to repeat our teen years.

Most of us have been bombarded with religious and cultural messages about what it takes to belong, who decides whether or not we belong and what might threaten our belonging. In all our choices, the issue of belonging stands in the background, whether or not we're aware of it. For most of us, wanting to belong runs the whole show. The trouble is most of us are convinced that we didn't make the cut, that we don't belong, so we spend all our time either auditioning for others' approval, hoping we'll be included, or pretending not to care whether we're in or out. At the bottom of all this suffering lies the "Trance of Scarcity."

Taking your place in the circle means belonging to the flow of all life, joining with it, drawing on its juice and vitality and making your own contribution to it.

A reporter once asked Albert Einstein, "Dr. Einstein, if you could ask the universe a single question and receive a direct reply, what would you ask?" His response was immediate, as though he had been pondering it for quite some time. "Is the universe friendly?"

What is your answer to this essential question? It's worth noting. How we answer this question forms the basis of our response to all that we encounter in our lives. Whether or not we allow ourselves in or out of any given situation depends on it.

If we answer that the universe is not friendly, we hold ourselves at the mercy of imagined, hostile external forces; we feel we're strictly on our own. This belief impoverishes every area of our lives. And we're not the only ones feeling this way. For centuries, humanity has been marinating in such messages, sometimes provided by religion, sometimes by society at large, insisting that we're unworthy outsiders, that we must earn our way to belonging.

Bound by this message, we feel alone, ashamed, permanently insufficient. We move through the world like dejected spectators: strained, isolated, telling ourselves story after story of our unworthiness and life's unfairness. Feeding on a continual diet of despair and rejection, courtesy of the Trance of Scarcity, we desperately seek ways to go numb. Our life force is gradually diminished to a whisper.

If we answer that the universe is friendly, however, we show up at the party ready to greet old friends and meet new ones. We add our signature dish to the potluck and prepare to feast. We understand that partaking of the flow takes nothing away from anyone else. We freely partake of and freely contribute to

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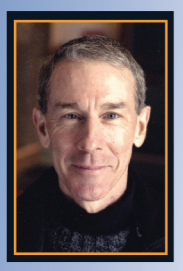
The circle is home to a flow of satisfying relationships, meaningful work, inspired learning, endless resources and opportunities, laughter and creativity and a prevailing sense of ease. Remember a time when you felt carefree, safe, energized and happy – maybe building a fort with some friends as a kid, or dancing with your sweetheart. That's the feeling: a pervasive sense of glad assurance. In the circle, life is not a series of obstacles to overcome; it's a steady flow of possibilities.

There is no fence around this circle, no admission gate, no entrance fee. Regardless of your age, your weight, the colour of your skin, your gender, your education, your nationality, your financial status or other people's opinions of you, you already belong here. No person or condition has the power to keep you out. You alone can take yourself out of the circle, but your place will always be reserved for you. Your place in the circle never expires. If you leave, it's simply vacant until you return.

So come on in. Or you may find that you don't have to move at all; the circle expands to include you. The circle can be as spacious or cozy as you like. Set down all the baggage you've been carrying. Isn't it nice to be rid of that burden? Your shoulders relax, you take a deep breath and your back uncoils. The tension begins to subside in your stomach and neck. It's like getting into a hot tub after a long rainy trudge on a winter's day. When you're ready, take time to wander all over the circle until you find the spot you like best. You can stand, sit, lie down, walk, turn cartwheels, whatever you choose to do. The nature of the circle is flow and you are part of that flow wherever you are and whatever you do within the circle. There is nothing here that you must force or control.

continued on p. 38

Dr. Reggie Ray Vancouver 2008 Lectures and Workshop



Reginald A. Ray, Ph.D., teaches within the dharma and meditation lineages of the great siddha Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche, and brings a special gift for applying Tibetan Buddhism to the problems, inspirations, and spiritual imperatives of modern people. On the faculty of Naropa University since its inception, his latest book is *Touching Enlightenment: Finding Realization in the Body.* He is also the author of *Indestructible Truth, The Secret of the Vajra World, Buddhists Saints in India, & In the Presence of Masters*

Free Public Lectures

Buddhist Meditation:
Using the Breath to Explore the Body
Friday, January 18, 7:00-9:00pm
Location: Auditorium, The Asian Centre, 1871 West Mall, UBC Campus

Tibetan Buddhism in the Modern World
Tuesday, January 22, 7:00-9:00pm
Location: Joseph & Rosalie Segal Centre, Simon Fraser University at Harbour Centre - 515 West Hastings Street

Amitabha's Heart: Love & Wisdom in Buddhism
Wednesday, January 23 , 7:00-9:00pm
Location: Joseph & Rosalie Segal Centre, Simon Fraser University at Harbour Centre - 515 West Hastings Street

Workshop

Touching Enlightenment with the Body
January 25-27, 2008

Public Talk - ($10CN at the door):
Friday, January 25, 7:00-9:00pm

Weekend Program - ($200 CN for the weekend; $100 CN for students with ID): January 26 & 27, 9:00am-4:00pm

Location: Auditorium, The Asian Centre, 1871 West Mall, UBC Campus

This workshop is suited for meditators and body workers of all levels and backgrounds.

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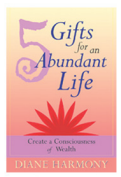

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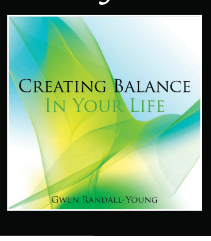

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Enlightened relationships

THE POWER OF NOW *Eckhart Tolle*

For love to flourish, the light of your presence needs to be strong enough so that you no longer get taken over by the thinker or the pain-body and mistake them for who you are. To know yourself as the Being underneath the thinker, the stillness underneath the mental noise, the love and joy underneath the pain, is freedom, salvation, enlightenment.

If you stop investing it with "selfness," the mind loses its compulsive quality, which basically is the compulsion to judge, and so to resist what is, which creates conflict, drama and new pain. In fact, the moment that judgment stops through acceptance of what is, you are free of the mind. You have made room for love, for joy, for peace.

First you stop judging yourself; then you stop judging your partner. The greatest catalyst for change in a relationship is complete acceptance of your partner as he or she is, without needing to judge or change them in any way. That immediately takes you beyond ego. All mind games and all addictive clinging are then over.

There are no victims and no perpetrators anymore, no accuser and accused. This is also the end of all co-dependency, of being drawn into somebody else's unconscious pattern and thereby enabling it to continue. You will then either separate – in love – or move ever more deeply into the Now together into Being. Can it be that simple? Yes, it is that simple.

Love is a state of Being. Your love is not outside; it is deep within you. You can never lose it and it cannot leave you. It is not dependent on some other body, some external form. In the stillness of your presence, you can feel your own formless and timeless reality as the unmanifested life that animates your physical form. You can then feel the same life deep within every other human and every other creature. You look beyond the veil of form and separation. This is the realization of oneness. This is love.

What is God? The eternal One Life underneath all the forms of life. What is love? To feel the presence of that One Life deep within yourself and within all creatures. To be it. Therefore, all love is the love of God.

Love is not selective, just as the light of the sun is not selective. It does not make one person special. It is not exclusive. Exclusivity is not the love of God but the "love" of ego. However, the intensity with which true love is felt can vary. There may be one person who reflects your love back to you more clearly and more intensely than others and if that person feels the same toward you, it can be said that you are in a love relationship with him or her. The bond that connects you with that person is the same bond that connects you with the person sitting next to you on a bus, or with a bird, a tree, a flower. Only the degree of intensity with which it is felt differs.

Even in an otherwise addictive relationship, there may be moments when something more real shines through, something beyond your mutual addictive needs. This may happen during physical intimacy or when you are both witnessing the miracle of childbirth, or in the presence of death, or when one of you is seriously ill – anything that renders the mind powerless. When this happens, your Being, which is usually buried underneath the mind, becomes revealed, and it is this that makes true communication possible.

True communication is communion – the realization of oneness, which is love. Usually, this is quickly lost again, unless you are able to stay present enough to keep out the mind and its old patterns.

Although brief glimpses are possible, love cannot flourish unless you are permanently free of mind identification and your presence is intense enough to have dissolved the pain-body or you can at least remain present as the watcher. The pain-body cannot then take you over and so become destructive of love.

First you stop judging yourself; then you stop judging your partner. The greatest catalyst for change in a relationship is complete acceptance of your partner as he or she is, without needing to judge or change them in any way.

Adapted from The Power of Now, *copyright 1999 by Eckhart Tolle. Reprinted with permission of New World Library, Novato, CA, 800-972-6657 (ext. 52). Visit www.eckharttolle.com*

The time of our lives

UNIVERSE WITHIN *Gwen Randall-Young*

SPIRITUALITY

Have you noticed how life just keeps getting busier? Everyone seems to be multi-tasking and over-booked. Parents with children are running in 16 different directions. Cell phones are ringing everywhere or people are checking their messages or reading their texts. Want to go for coffee? First, one must check the Blackberry.

At home it is the same. Check the emails; record the TV program there is no time to watch; cook something quick and don't forget to get to the gym.

We were not designed to function this way. Technology has altered our sense of time. Things used to happen in a more linear way. Now, so much happens all at once.

Recently, my mother came across a box of letters I had saved from my university days. Going through them, I remembered what it was like to sit down and write to a friend and then wait a few weeks for a reply. I recalled what a joy it was to check my mailbox in residence and find a letter from a friend or family member. Reading through some of the letters, I realized that we were sharing our evolving lives. These were not quick messages or something copied and forwarded; they were heartfelt exchanges.

There is no question that the sped-up pace we live with now creates stress and tension. The body/mind is dealing with so much more input and is having to output at an ever-increasing rate. Having to respond to so much in the external world distracts us from our own inner world and the connection with our own souls.

The experience of time is completely different for the ego and soul. Ego is based completely in the world and so feels the pressure of time. Things have to get done; we have to be on time; time is running out; there is not enough time. For ego, it is as though time is a "real" commodity. There is only a certain amount of it. If it is used up, then it is "the past." If we have not yet used it, it is "the future."

Sometimes, it is as if we are running through time, trying desperately to keep just a little ahead of it. No wonder it can feel like we are on a treadmill, never able to finish, let alone win the "rat race." And, of course, this is all the illusion of ego. When we turn ego off, along with its incessant thinking, time ceases to exist. Our soul is that aspect of our being that is connected to the eternal; that *is* eternal.

This entire lifetime, even the lifetime of our species, is but a brief instant. Perhaps the ego experience is like a reverse dream for soul. Ego goes to sleep at night and for a brief time leaves all that is worldly behind. Life may simply be soul's dreaming, dropping for a brief time into worldliness.

Soul knows this worldly experience, complete with the perception of time, is not the real thing. That is why meditation can create such a sense of peace. For that period of time, while we are awake, we can transcend the illusion and re-enter the eternal stream. There, there is no rush, no stress, no worry. If we truly transcend the moment, there is no duality at all.

Still, we do have to function in this world. We just do not have to do it ego's way. You have heard of lucid dreaming, wherein one is aware he or she is dreaming and can direct what happens in the dream. Bringing our soulfulness in the world is like soul's lucid dream. We are aware we are in the physical world, but we can allow soul to direct this "waking dream."

The quality of life shifts dramatically when we do this. It is true that when we take away all of ego's thoughts, perceptions and agendas, all that is left is soul, and soul is love.

Gwen Randall-Young is a psychotherapist in private practice and the author of Growing Into Soul: The Next Step in Human Evolution. *For articles and information about her books and "Deep Powerful Change" personal growth/hypnosis CDs, visit www.gwen.ca. See display ad this issue.*

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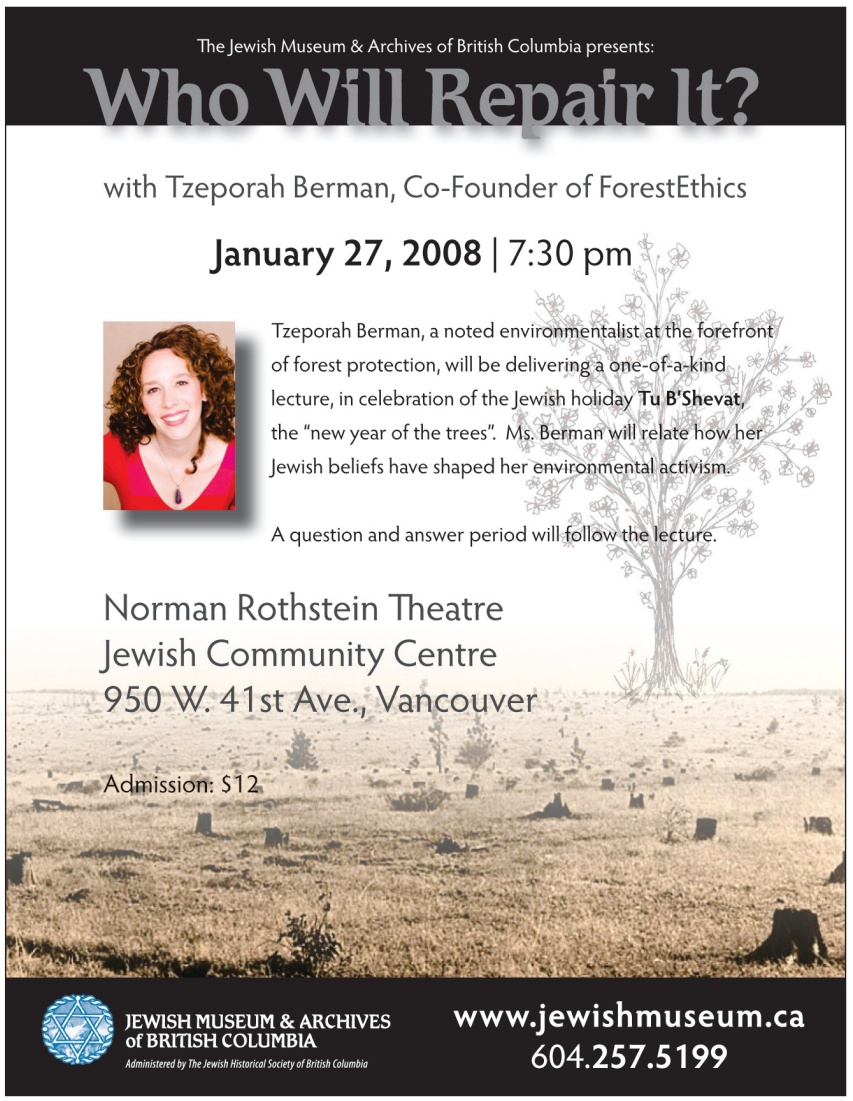
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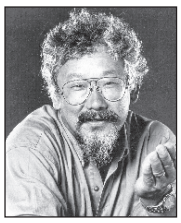


Getting to know our planet

SCIENCE MATTERS *David Suzuki with Faisal Moola*

We know that our planet is heating up. And we know that international climate negotiations like the ones that took place in Bali last month are critical steps towards a global action plan to reduce heat-trapping greenhouse gases. But how will we be able to gauge if such a plan actually works?

In spite of all we have learned about our climate and our planet's natural systems over the past two decades, relatively big holes exist in our capacity to monitor exactly where global greenhouse gases are coming from and where they are going. That's going to have to change in the coming years because we can no longer afford to leave such important measures to guesswork.

It may be hard for many of us to remember a time when global information was not readily available at our fingertips, but the amazing ability to access such vast amounts of data is a relatively recent phenomenon.

The earth is incredibly complex. Living in a sustainable way within the planet's limits will require that we really get to know Earth most intimately.

Today, with supercomputers and the internet, we can now share, combine, calculate and analyze information like never before. For a simple example, think about the software program Google Earth. The capacity for anyone with a computer to see the entire planet in one instance and then zoom down to view a close-up of virtually anywhere on the globe is simply astounding.

Still, even with all this available data, we need much more. The earth is incredibly complex. To be able to understand how it works, even in a basic sense, requires that vast amounts of information be acquired and monitored over time. Living in a sustainable way within the planet's limits will require that we really get to know Earth most intimately.

ENVIRONMENT

Recently, a special edition of the journal *Nature* looked at this issue and how well we are doing in monitoring the planet. The results are mixed. Huge strides forward have been achieved in some areas, while others limp along with sporadic funding or political changes that may stop projects entirely.

One of the most obvious measurements that must be tracked over time is the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. As the principle greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide is a key mechanism in global warming. But critical questions remain. Half of the carbon dioxide we put into the atmosphere gets soaked up again. Where it goes is the subject of much debate. Some say the oceans; others say soils or plants. The reality is we don't know for sure.

Two satellites to be launched this year should help us get a better understanding of what's going on. One is called the Orbiting Carbon Observatory; it will circle the earth measuring carbon dioxide levels a half-million times every day. This information will be combined with models of how our atmosphere circulates to give us a better understanding of how the earth absorbs carbon dioxide. Another project is called the Greenhouse Gases Observing Satellite. It will also measure carbon dioxide as well as other important greenhouse gases such as methane, ozone and water vapour.

Many other projects are planned or already underway that will measure variables such as ice cover, soil moisture, urban growth and desertification, wind speeds, ocean temperatures, phytoplankton growth and many more. Yet for every planned project, there are budget shortfalls, delays, political interference, international overlaps and duplications that can result in critical gaps in data. This can be a serious problem.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and other human impacts on the planet is a vital task. But measuring and accounting for these changes is just as important. It's the only way we'll ever know if what we're doing is having an effect.

Accumulating basic sets of data about the planet over long periods of time may be the scientific equivalent of watching paint dry, but it is absolutely essential work if we are to understand and protect our complicated little world.

Take David Suzuki's Nature Challenge and learn more at davidsuzuki.org

The carbon years – then lift-off!

EARTHFUTURE *Guy Dauncey*

What is happening to our civilization? Report after report warns us that climate change, driven by our use of fossil fuels, is pushing us towards the cliff.

Ever since the 1970s, the framing of environmental problems has often been "good Earth, bad humans." Humans are sometimes said to be like a cancer, exhausting Earth's resources and polluting Nature's body until it's all over. Some suggest that it might be better if humans did kill themselves off, leaving nature to recover without us.

I am appalled by this way of thinking. I believe deeply in the beauty of the human spirit. We have the ability to achieve incredible things, as well as to be totally stupid. I love the fact that we are 100 percent a part of nature, that the same genes which create flippers in fish create our fingers and toes.

I like to view our existence through the lens of time, stretching millions of years into both the past and the future. Like all species, we learn as we go along, starting from a place of total ignorance about the Universe. We have been asking serious questions for at least 10,000 years. With the development of written language, we were able to formalize our thoughts, enabling new generations to build on the intellectual capital of their ancestors.

Hindu and Babylonian thinkers created organized philosophies 5,000 years ago. When the Greek and Roman civilizations collapsed, the torch of enquiry was carried forward in the Muslim world and rediscovered in Europe at the end of the Middle Ages.

The spirit of enquiry has often sought to break free from the blanket of tradition that was passed from one generation to the next. It is the same impulse that causes a young salmon to try a new river, a wolf to seek new territory. It is by this spirit that we learnt how to make fire by burning wood and steam by burning coal.

From 1500 to 1800 AD, developments in Europe enabled the spirit of enquiry to break free, leading us to establish organized systems of science, democracy and human rights.

Hand-in-hand with the spirit of enquiry, we released the spirit of freedom that wanted desperately to escape from poverty and serfdom, kings and aristocrats. When Prince Albert organized the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, six million people came to marvel at the promise of a new world. Using the concentrated power of ancient fossil fuels, we developed the technologies our world is based on today.

Looking back, are we to say all this was wrong? Was it the spirit of enquiry itself that was wrong? I hardly think so.

So let us think our way through this crisis. We are burning fossil fuels that were laid down over 200 million years. Every year, we burn a million years of stored, ancient sunlight. We are certainly using this one-time gift from the past to indulge our whims, but we are also using it to build intellectual capital.

We could not have developed a solar cell, LED light bulb or plug-in hybrid electric car in 1750. We needed this one-time burst of ancient energy to lift us to a position where we could power our world with renewable energy without further need of fossil fuels.

Seen this way, the age of fossil fuels is the ramp of intellectual capital that enables us to take off into a permanent post-carbon world. Thanks to coal, oil and gas, we have been able to build the scientific and engineering skills we need to do without them.

The climate crisis is extremely urgent. The scientists are warning that if we are to avoid 450 ppm of CO_2, bringing a 2 C° temperature rise, the melt-down of Greenland and a six-metre rise in sea level, we must cease our global yearly increase in emissions within 10 years and then move to a carbon neutral world as rapidly as possible. The sooner we achieve lift-off, the less will be the chance of collapse and foul landing.

This is not a time for hand-wringing and despair. This is a time for courage, passion and excitement about the next great energy revolution.

This is a time for determination and working together to embrace and adopt the solutions. This is the moment of lift-off, which can lead us to a healthy, ecologically sustainable world and a host of future promises.

Guy Dauncey is president of the BC Sustainable Energy Association (www.bcsea.org). He lives in Victoria.

SPECIAL REPORT 2

Published by AGAINST PORT EXPANSION (APE) www.againstportexpansion.org

Your Health, Community and Environment are in danger of being ruined forever

Together we can Stop GATEWAY at the Source

Deltaport, August 1, 2007

Say NO!

to DELTAPORT TERMINAL 2

Toxic Air

We already have too much!

The thick dirty band of smog that frequently covers Vancouver's mountains and funnels up the Fraser Valley is going to expand until the skies look like Los Angeles, shown here. Hemmed in by mountains, the pollution will rest in Delta and the Valley poisoning the air, our health and environment.

Gateway will devastate Delta and the Fraser Valley

Ship emissions blamed for 105,000 deaths yearly

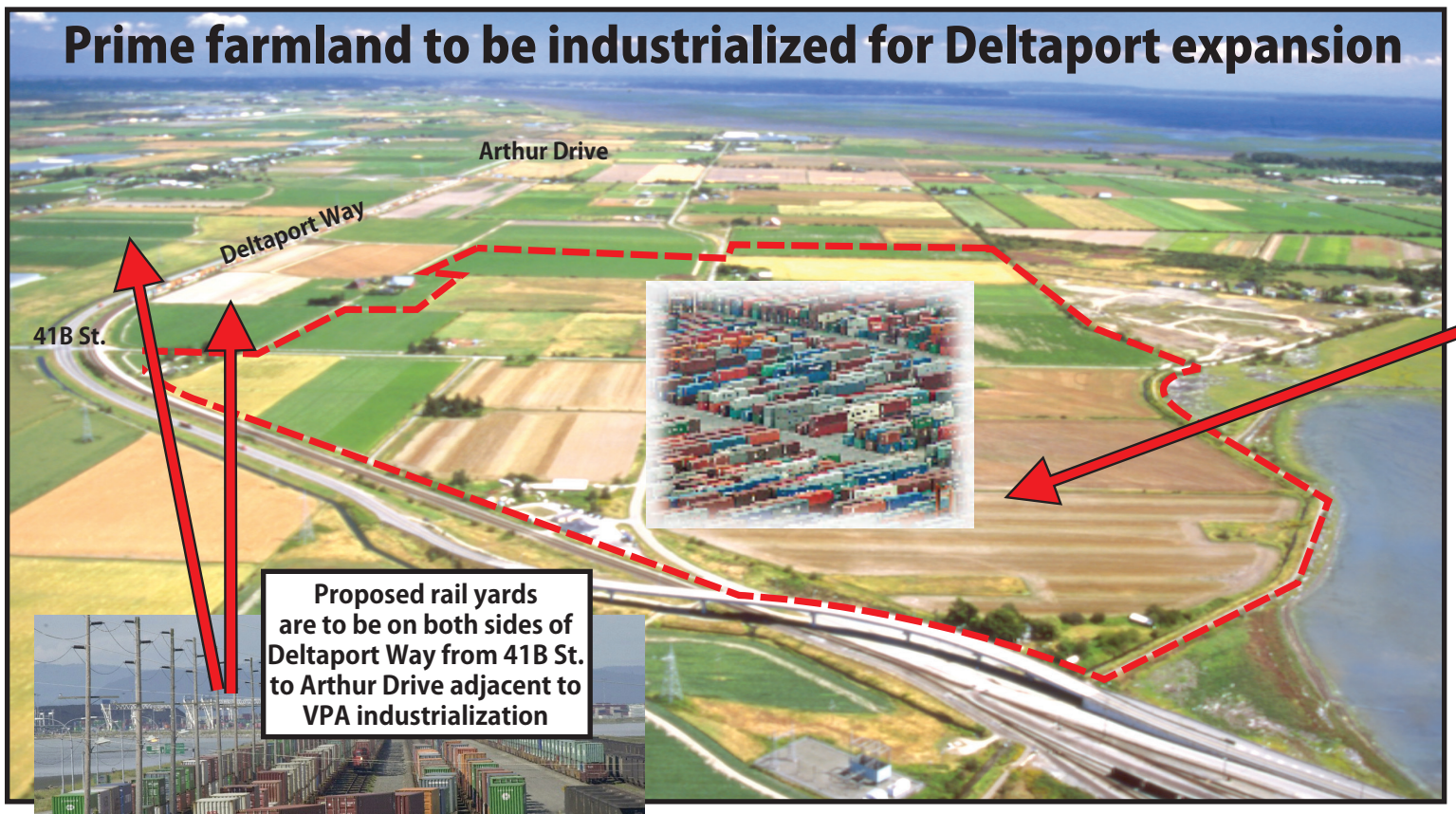
A new study in the journal of the American Chemical Society links pollution from marine shipping to heart and lung disease.The report blames 5,000 premature deaths annually in North America on pollution from shipping. . . The number of deaths a year could rise by as much as 40 per cent by 2012 with the expected growth in shipping activity.

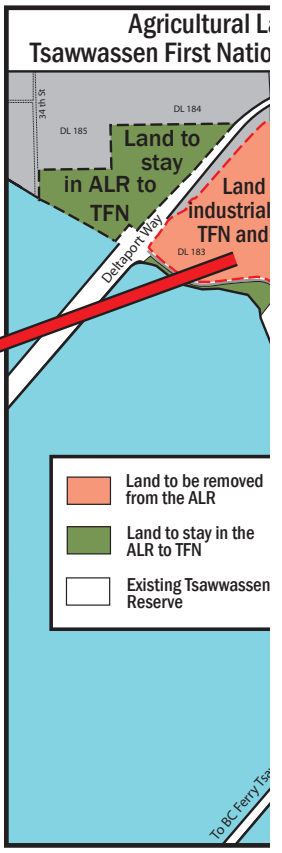
Vancouver Sun, November 14, 2007

Terminal 2 with 3 new berths at Deltaport will:

- **Pollute Delta, Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley Communities**
- **Industrialize farmland in Delta and the Fraser Valley Agricultural Land Reserve**
- **Destroy Fraser River habitats**

Health, Environment and Farmland wil


Prime farmland to be industrialized for Deltaport expansion
Arthur Drive
Deltaport Way
41B St.
Proposed rail yards are to be on both sides of Deltaport Way from 41B St. to Arthur Drive adjacent to VPA industrialization



Stop Terminal 2 Now

The Deltaport Third Berth was approved after a flawed environmental assessment and now the Vancouver Port Authority is seeking approval for Terminal 2 with 3 more berths. This will triple Deltaport's current capacity bringing three times the number of containers and trucks through Delta and Metro Vancouver. Deltaport Third Berth (DP3) is under construction. Although the controversial South Fraser Perimeter Road (SFPR) is not needed for DP3, it is another step in the Gateway mega-development plan and paves the way for Terminal 2. The SFPR which is planned to connect Deltaport to the Trans-Canada Highway, will travel through several communities as it:

"plows through fertile farmland; skirts the edges of Burns Bog; crosses 70 streams; runs past nesting grounds of eagles, herons, owls and several threatened species; . . . bulldozes over archeological sites . . ."

(Vancouver Sun June 20, 2005)

Deltaport Terminal 2 is not needed. Once DP3 is operational this port will be able to handle more than double what it handles today. Government statistics reveal the projected future demand can be met by existing BC ports and their planned expansions without ever building Terminal 2.

The Gateway Mega-Development Plan

Gateway is about serving the interests of business, seaports, airports, carriers and crown corporations. It is about their plan for a road and rail transportation system through Greater Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, across western Canada and south to the United States focusing on Asia-Pacific trade, It's about using our governments, public assets and tax dollars to fulfill their plan of industrializing the south arm of the Fraser River. The Gateway Program is 34 projects including Deltaport Third Berth (under construction), Terminal 2 (proposed) and the South Fraser Perimeter Road. It includes new and expanded highways, bridges, rail expansions, rail yards and container terminals. It involves 16 strategies to assist business and crown corporations in achieving their goals. These include reducing their taxes, increasing borrowing, loosening legislation, increasing government funding and industrializing land.

"Gateway is not the result of expert advice. It is not the result of public consultation. And it is not the result of consultation with local governments…Gateway is simply the result of blatantly self interested lobbying by business interests…" Burnaby Mayor Derek Corrigan, Sept. 29, 2007, Spirit of Sustainability Gateway Rally

Speculating with Public Funds

The Canadian and B.C. Governments are bulldozing ahead with the $multi-billion Gateway Program on a gamble that we might become the major North American distribution centre for Asia-Pacific trade. In Metro Vancouver, taxpayers will pay in excess of **$7 billion (Major Commercial Transportation System, 2003, Delcan for Gateway Council, page 75)** for the 24/7 movement of container trucks and trains resulting in air pollution, health issues, gridlock traffic, noise pollution, light pollution, habitat destruction and loss of farmland. It makes no business, ecological or social sense. (See: Terminal 2 Not Needed on back page)

Gateway Win-Win for land developers

Already land speculators are reaping millions in windfall profits by selling land at inflated prices to the Ministry of Transportation. Armed with the knowledge of the route for the South Fraser Perimeter Road, speculators have bought properties on the edge of Burns Bog and flipped them to the government making profits of $2 million within a year.

Since the 1980s, there have been plans to move port business out of the Vancouver inner harbour over to Deltaport and the south arm of the Fraser River. If Deltaport fails to acquire the projected increase in container traffic, port business from Vancouver could be moved to Deltaport. This would free up waterfront land in Vancouver for very profitable real estate development.

Gateway to Pollution: Diesel emissions damage lungs, increase heart disease and increase the risk of cancer

Gateway projects will pollute the Fraser Valley airshed having a devastating impact on human health. The Deltaport expansion at Roberts Bank does not comply with the Metro Vancouver Air Quality Management Plan and will exceed standards for deadly particulate matter for which there is no safe level.

Transportation expert Dr. J. Holtzclaw **(New Emissions Assay: Freeway Growth Pollutes; Traffic Calming Cleans)** warns that within four years of building a new freeway, total air emissions will be up more than 90% from before it opened. Citing several studies in his article, Dr. Holtzclaw states that final results indicate that highway expansions to relieve traffic congestion increase motor vehicle emissions, whether they free up traffic or not.

Numerous studies confirm that emissions pose a health risk to people who live near highways and ports, especially children, pregnant women, the elderly and asthmatics. A 2007 study in California: **(Keck School of Medicine Researchers)** links permanent lung damage to traffic pollution:

"People who live within 500 meters of a motorway grow up with significantly reduced lung capacity…"

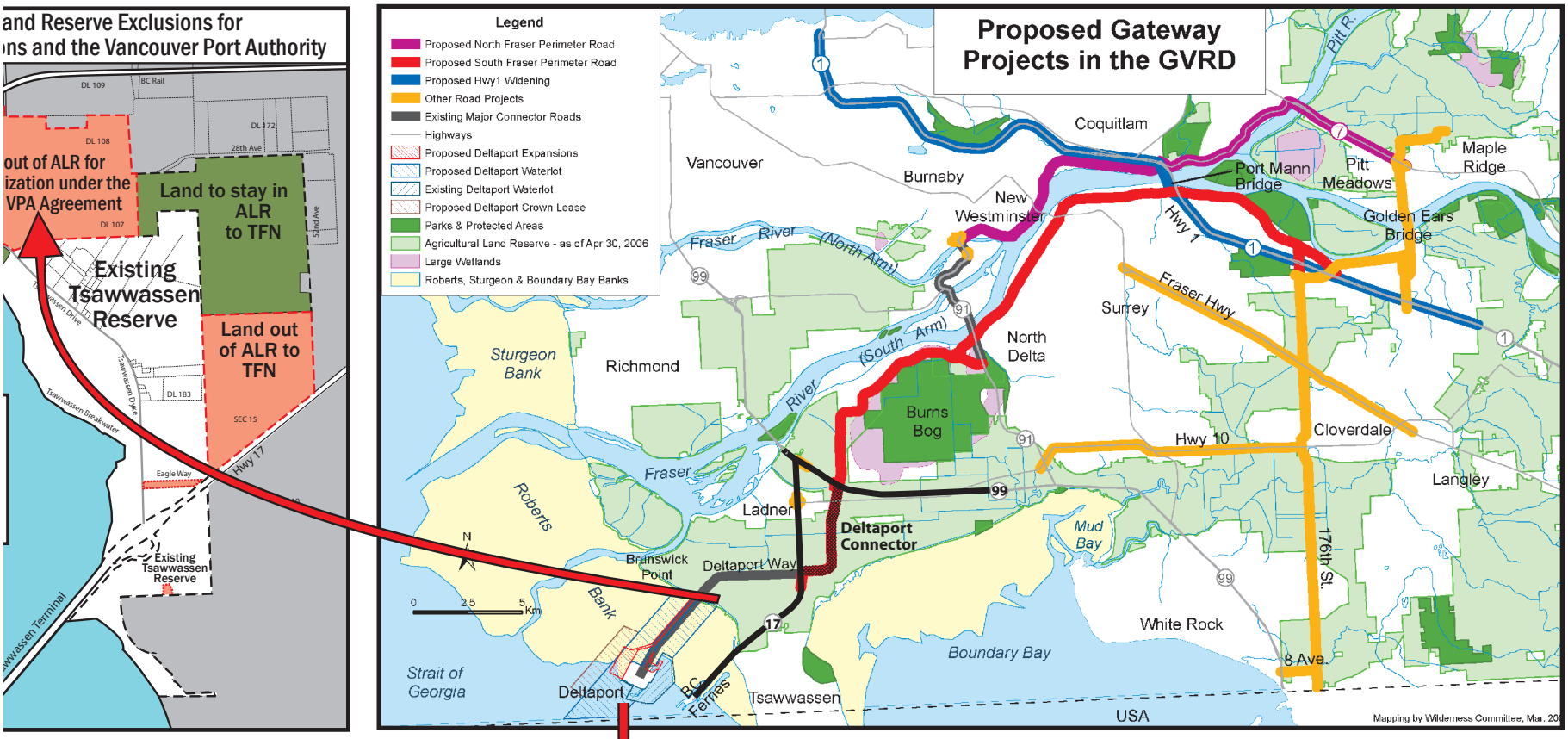
Up to 16 schools and 37 parks in Delta and Surrey will be within one kilometer (1,000 meters) of the South Fraser Perimeter Road. This is acknowledged in the plans which state:

"With increased air pollution there can possibly be increased employment (e.g. in the health sector) because of the economic activity associated with correcting the results of its impacts."

(South Fraser Perimeter Road, EA Application, Technical Vol. 16, page 39)

In 2003, the U.S. Sierra Club published **"Key Studies on air pollution and health effects near high-traffic areas"**, linking air pollution to cancer, asthma, shortened lives, respiratory illnesses, and mortality from particulate matter. W.J. Gauderman, in another study claims: "by age 18, the lungs of many children who grow up in smoggy areas are underdeveloped and will likely never recover".

l be destroyed by Deltaport Terminal 2



Massey Tunnel Nightmare

The Canadian government has committed up to $100 million to fund construction of the **Deltaport Connector** which will give container trucks a direct route from Deltaport to Highway 99. Deltaport Way will be extended through the Agricultural Land Reserve with a new access to Hwy, 99 just south of the Hwy.17 access. Ferry traffic and residents of Ladner and Tsawwassen will have to merge with a wall of trucks to access Highway 99. There are plans to make Highway 17 a municipal road so the B.C. Government can wash its hands of the congestion problems.

Container trucks and other traffic to and from Deltaport are likely to increase by at least 50 percent – and perhaps more - once the Third berth is operational. Terminal 2 will triple the current number of trucks. Imagine the massive increase in container trucks feeding into the Massey Tunnel!

Catastrophic Oil Spill

It's just a matter of time before there is an environmental catastrophe at Roberts Bank like the oil spill on Nov. 7, 2007 in San Francisco Bay, one of the richest migratory bird regions on the Pacific Coast. The spill came as migratory birds of the Pacific Flyway were winging south for the winter. The shoreline and nesting grounds are now soaked in oil. The Fraser River Delta and San Francisco Bay are both major stopovers of the Pacific Flyway with more than 5 million birds migrating from 20 different countries over 3 continents. These major stopovers are crucial to the survival of over 300 species of birds including the world's populations of 3.6 million migrating Western Sandpipers.

Red – Proposed fill of 200 acres for Terminal 2 with 3 new berths

Yellow - Deltaport Third Berth under construction with 50 acres of fill

Existing container terminal is 2 berths

Red line is proposed rail and road expansions

Oops! What about the space marked with a question mark (?) Vancouver Port Authority says the fate of that area is undetermined. Is it for more fill?

Wildlife destruction at Roberts Bank is an International Disgrace

Photo courtesy of Stefan Jacobs and Centre for Whale Research

Despite all the scientific evidence that Deltaport expansion will cause massive loss of critical habitat at the mouth of the most important salmon river in the world, Provincial and Federal Governments are condoning the development. And for what? A gamble that Deltaport be the centre for containers from Asia?

"We are concerned that the "chain" of the Pacific Flyway could be broken for shorebirds at some point given the ongoing economic development in the Delta."

"If it does occur, the state of eutrophication is predicted to result in such massive environmental change between the causeways that there would be public outrage as well as agency embarrassment on an international scale"

(Environment Canada, EA Assessment Deltaport Third Berth, April 27, 2005)

Rich in intertidal eelgrass beds, marshes and mudflats, Roberts Bank at the estuary of the Fraser River provides habitat not only for millions of resident and migratory birds, but also for migrating salmon, and 3 pods of resident, endangered Orca whales which feed off Roberts Bank. The federal government set up the National Recovery Strategy for the Orcas in 2005. Now the government is approving industrialization of Roberts Bank and an increase in super-sized container ships travelling through shared Canadian –U.S. waters known at Orca Pass which is "critical habitat" for the endangered Orcas. With several international designations and agreements, how can our governments industrialize this ecosystem which is unparalleled anywhere in the world?

In contradiction to long-standing plans for the Roberts Bank Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and a protective Order-In-Council, construction in the 1980s and secret deals in 2004 have removed up to 5,888 acres of estuary habitat from future WMA designation. Most of this massive area is to be transferred to the management of the Vancouver Port Authority for container business.

Senior bureaucrats and lawyers in Ottawa pushed through approval of the Deltaport Third Berth despite warnings from their own scientists. Now the same manipulated process is underway for the South Fraser Perimeter Road. Terminal 2 is next. Government agencies are splitting the Gateway Projects for piecemeal reviews. Instead, there should be a comprehensive environmental assessment of the rationale and cumulative effects of all Gateway projects together done by an Independent Panel of credible experts.

"Ours to Preserve by Hand and Heart" Delta's coat of arms

Brunswick Point, Delta

Deltaport Terminal 2 is Not Needed!

- By the BC Government's own Ports Strategy forecast, BC will need container port capacity of 5-7 million containers (TEUs) by the year 2020. Vancouver Port Authority is forecasting 8.8 million – a growth rate that industry experts say is unrealistic. However, even if that figure were to be realized, there will be more than enough capacity in BC without ever building Terminal 2. Lower Mainland ports combined will have a potential capacity of 6 – 6.7 million TEUs. Add in Prince Rupert, operating at its full potential of 4 million TEUs, and there is a total potential capacity on the BC West Coast of up to 10.7 million TEUs. So Terminal 2 will never be needed
- Close to 60 percent of containers coming to Vancouver are for Eastern Markets. When the expanded Panama Canal opens (2014), permitting larger ships to travel direct to the East Coast, some ships will bypass BC and go straight to East Coast ports. Already containers from India and South Asia bound for North America are going via the Suez Canal. Vancouver is vulnerable to losing container traffic to cheaper and faster alternative routes.
- Roberts Bank is not a natural harbour and is exposed to storms. High winds can sometimes result in the port closing down – especially in winter. Shipping companies do not like Deltaport for this reason. One of the largest shipping companies, Maersk, introduced a surcharge in 2007 for ships calling in Vancouver ports.
- Prince Rupert on the north coast is a natural deep sea harbour. It is two sailing days closer to Asia and a better rail route to East Canada and US markets.

South Fraser Perimeter Road, a Disaster

The South Fraser Perimeter Road (see map inside page) demonstrates the lengths the B.C. Government is willing to go to fulfill its Gateway dream; disregarding air quality, taking 241 acres of prime farmland out of production, cutting down 36 acres of forest on the edge of Burns Bog, degrading Pacific Flyway habitat, acquiring 500 properties, expropriating 200 homes, disturbing at least four important archaeological sites and cutting through the neighbourhoods of Sunbury, Annieville, Royal Heights, and Bridgeview bringing them noise pollution as well as life-threatening air quality. The land that is to be paved over is prime farmland, the very best we have in Canada. The loss of 18 hectares alone represents 10% of B.C.'s cranberry production valued at $30 – million a year

Global warming is a reality. Building more roads means more trucks and cars emitting more greenhouse gases. There is no way that either the Provincial or Federal governments can support the Gateway Program and reach their targets for reducing greenhouse gases.

APE (Against Port Expansion in Delta)

APE is a community group that recognizes that port expansion at Deltaport will degrade the quality of life of thousands of Lower Mainland residents, industrialize prime agricultural land and destroy globally-significant habitat for salmon, resident and migrating birds and Orca whales. We are a broad-based group of people including homemakers, business owners, workers, academics and environmental groups. We share the view that serious concerns about port expansions on Roberts Bank have been ignored in order to fast-track unjustified port developments.

ACT NOW! to stop Terminal 2

Terminal 2 can be stopped! And with no Terminal 2 the South Fraser Perimeter Road is not needed.

1. **Contact the Prime Minister, BC's Premier, MLAs and MPs.** Tell them you want an immediate stop to Terminal 2. There are other options that avoid this environmental and social disaster.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper
80 Wellington Street, Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2
Email: pm@pm.gc.ca Phone: (613) 992-4211

Premier Gordon Campbell
PO Box 9041 STN Prov. Gov't, Victoria, B.C. V8W 9E1
Email: premier@gov.bc.ca Phone: (250) 387-1715

Hon. David Emerson, M.P. Minister for Pacific Gateway, House of Commons, Ottawa,Ontario K1A 0A6
Email: Emerson.D@parl.gc.ca Phone: (613) 943-0267

Hon. Kevin Falcon, M.LA Minister of Transportation
Room 306 Parliament Buildings, Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X4
Email: Kevin.Falcon.MLA@leg.bc.ca Phone: (250) 387-1978

John Cummins, M.P. Delta-Richmond East
4871 Delta Street,Delta, B.C. V4K 2T9, Email: cummins@dccnet.com, Phone: (604) 940-8040

South Delta MLA Val Roddick Delta South
4805 Delta Street, Delta, B.C. V4K 2T7
Email: Val.Roddick.MLA@leg.bc.ca

2. **Get active in your community.** Join up help and help out. See the list of community groups (sidebar on the right) actively working to stop Terminal 2 and Gateway in your area.

YES!

www.againstportexpansion.org

Here's my donation to Against Port Expansion (APE)

Enclosed is: ☐ $25 ☐ $50 ☐ $100 ☐ Other $____

☐ **Please add my name to the APE Contact List** **Go to APE website for Paypal donation**

NAME PHONE

ADDRESS

CITY PROV PC EMAIL

Please make cheques payable to APE, P.O. Box 18060, 1215-C 56th Street, Delta, B.C. V4L 2M4

Don't Pave Our Future

Farmland will be used for railway expansions, rail yards, container storage and the South Fraser Perimeter Road, including the Deltaport Connector. These plans will fragment farm operations and devastate the agriculture industry in Delta which produces upwards of $160 million per year in farm gate receipts. Only 5% of land in B.C. is suitable for agriculture and Delta boasts the best soils and climate.

A recent government study claims that to maintain the current level of food self-reliance through to the year 2025, farmers will need to increase production by 30% over 2001 levels. Our governments are willing to forfeit the successful agriculture business in Delta for the dubious business of moving containers through Metro Vancouver. This will lead to more industrial development of Fraser Valley farmlands.

Gateway Videos

Go to www.youtube.com and search for damiengillis to view excellent, informative videos about Gateway and those protesting against it.

Stop Gateway Groups

APE (Against Port Expansion in Delta)
www.againstportexpansion.org

Port Public Awareness Action Group
portstop@dccnet.com

Boundary Bay Conservation Committee
taitt@telus.net

Point Roberts Registered Voters Association
prvoters@gmail.com

Burns Bog Conservation Society
www.burnsbog.org

The Save Delta Coalition www.save-delta.com

Gateway 40 Network Phone: 604-536-2790
Email: info@stopgateway.ca www.stopgateway.ca
ACORN Community Services, Against Port Expansion (APE), Ahavat Olam Synagogue, BC NDP Agriculture Committee, BC Great Blue Heron Society, Birdland Residents Association, Boundary Bay Conservation Committee, Bridgeview Community Association, Burns Bog Conservation Society, Canadian Auto Workers, local 111 (Bus Drivers), Canadian Action Party, Central Valley Naturalists, Council of Canadians, Cut Carbon Now, Delta Residents for a Healthy Community, East Ladner Residents Association, False Creek Watershed Society, Farmland Defence League, Federation of BC Naturalists, Fraser Heights Community Association, Fraser River Coalition, Fraser Valley Conservancy, Fraser Valley Conservation Coalition, Green Party of BC, Langley Conservation Network, Livable Region Coalition (Langley Chapter), Port Mann Community Association, Port Action Network, Save our Rivers Society, SmartGrowth BC, South Fraser Unitarian Church, Student Action for the Environment (SAFE) – Kwantlen Students, Students Against Port Expanstion, Sunbury Neighbourhood Association, Surrey Environmental Partners, Soil and Water Conservation Assoc of BC, There is Another Way – Hoover/Naas, Unitarian Church of Vancouver, White Rock/South Surrey Naturalists

SPEC (Society Promoting Environmental Conservation) Phone: 604-736-7732 www.spec.bc.ca

Livable Region Coalition www.livableregion.ca

Better Environmentally Sound Transportation (BEST)
www.best.bc.ca

Gateway Sucks www.gatewaysucks.ca

Coalition to Save Eagleridge Bluffs
www.eagleridgebluffs.ca

Wilderness Committee
www.wildernesscommitte.org

ActionInTime www.actionintime.org

Gateway Road Map:
Courtesy of the Wilderness Committee
Photos of farmland by Calen Darnel
Thanks to Nik Cuff and Paul George of ActionInTime for producing this newspaper. Email: nikcuff@shaw.ca
Printed in Canada on 100% recycled newsprint

Movies that change the world

by Joseph Roberts

For some time now, I have been recommending a series of great movies for my friends to watch. These are brilliant films and worth watching because God knows there is a lot of crap filling the racks at most regular video stores. I like to tell others when something is tremendously entertaining and informative. Much insight was gleaned from the following DVDs. If a picture is worth a thousand words, the following films equal a good book.

The recent actions of our government, both provincially and federally, just feels like a bad movie where you can't leave or get your money back. The popcorn is GMO and the fake butter causes the flu. Take PM Stephen Harper's embarrassing pro-oil antics at the Bali Conference on Global Warming. We dedicate the accompanying Titanic-like film poster starring Japan, USA and Canada for dragging their industrialized corporate heels against the wishes of the rest of the world. Peter MacKay parroted that Canada should take a bigger leadership roll in the Afghanistan "Mission" one day after George W. Bush said other NATO nations should take a bigger leadership role in the Afghanistan "Mission." Peter McKay is Bush's man, not Canada's man.

The Tar Sands in Alberta have been renamed the Oil Sands, and a war has become a mission.

And where are the Greens, NDP and Liberals on these issues? Basically, standing back hoping the Neo-Conservatives will continue to do stupid things, and thus become more and more unpopular due to their own actions.

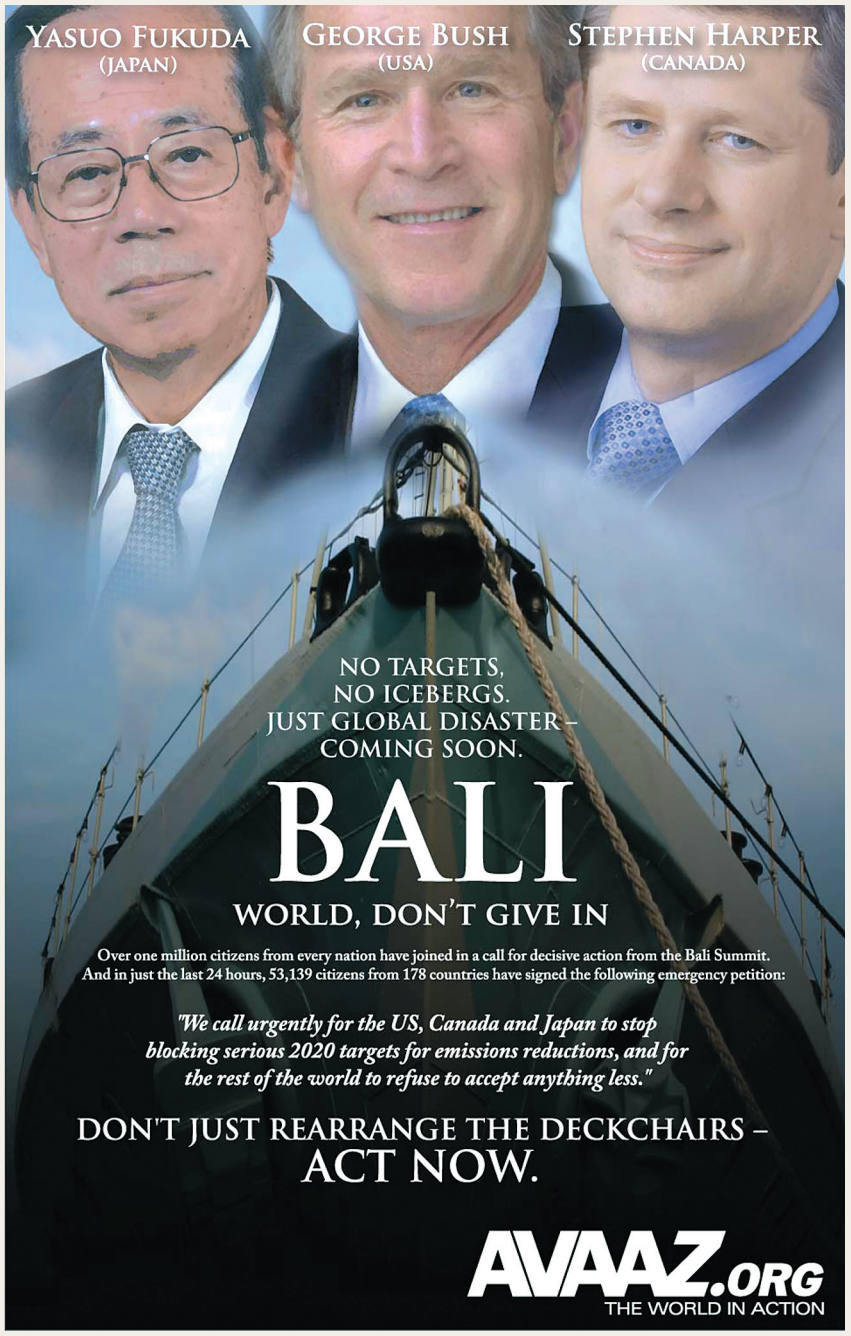
Here is my list of films I have enjoyed and learned much from:

Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room

This film shows who did what to screw their employees, shareholders, lenders and peasants paying their electrical bills. Enronites intentionally caused rolling brown outs and caused electrical shortages to force Californians to accept hugely overpriced power. It shows how Arnold Schwarzenegger's political campaign got funded by the insurance underwriters who would rather fork out a few million to get Arnold elected as state governor than pay billions back that were stolen by Enron and their associates. We need to learn from California's mistakes and not let BC Hydro be Enronized. The current provincial government supports transactional power privatizing and the sell-off of our hydro assets to independent power producers who will steal our rivers and jack up the price of electricity. *Enron* contains a Valentine video from both Bush presidents thanking Kenneth Lay of Enron for being the biggest donator to Bush Jr.'s campaign. A footnote (not in the video) is that the files investigating the Enron scandal were in Building 7 at the World Trade Centre in NYC. This was the building that was never touched by a plane, but somehow managed to implode in a controlled demolition-like manner (google Building 7 WTC for further details).

Who Killed the Electric Car?

A great complement to the Enron saga.


YASUO FUKUDA
(JAPAN)
GEORGE BUSH
(USA)
STEPHEN HARPER
(CANADA)
NO TARGETS,
NO ICEBERGS.
JUST GLOBAL DISASTER –
COMING SOON.
BALI
WORLD, DON'T GIVE IN
Over one million citizens from every nation have joined in a call for decisive action from the Bali Summit.
And in just the last 24 hours, 53,139 citizens from 178 countries have signed the following emergency petition:
"We call urgently for the US, Canada and Japan to stop blocking serious 2020 targets for emissions reductions, and for the rest of the world to refuse to accept anything less."
DON'T JUST REARRANGE THE DECKCHAIRS –
ACT NOW.
AVAAZ.ORG
THE WORLD IN ACTION

Did you know that back in the 1930s big car companies bought up electric trolleys in America and moth-balled them in order to increase demand for cars? The film tells the true story of how GM already had a popular electric car on the road called the EV1. But instead of increasing electric vehicle sales to all the people who wanted them, GM recalled them all and sent them to a crusher.

The 11th Hour

Covers the global warming, climate change issues very well. I prefer it to *An Inconvenient Truth*, which is also worth a view. One gem I got out of watching this flick was that it put in perspective why there are no mass produced electric cars in America. The oil companies are bigger. Mobil Exxon (rhythms with Enron) alone is larger than all the car companies in the US. My metaphor is think of automobiles as photocopies (or ink jet printers) on wheels and that the consumables or toner is where the real money is. Selling gas is why we have gas-powered cars; we don't have oil refineries because the cars are petroleum-powered. The hydrogen highway, though an interesting concept, can be an environmental horror story. Remember Arnold Schwarzenegger who promotes the hydrogen in his hydrogen-powered Hummer. Bio-fuel extracted from crops would starve the world's growing population to feed cars, not unlike the Irish potato famine where the Irish peasants starved while Ireland exported food to jolly old England's colonialists.

Death of a President

I was originally turned off from watching this movie because of the bad press it got, even by a reviewer who had not even watched it. When you know who owns most of the mass media and their friends, go figure. This is a fictional documentary about the assassination of George W. Bush. This film portrays the reaction of police and the legal system in the USA. It is so accurate one could call it fictional anthropology.

Bobby

I never really understood what an amazing man Bobby Kennedy was until this movie. It took Martin Sheen's son Emilio Estévez six years to produce it. It's worth watching just for the incredible lineup of actors, including Anthony Hopkins, Sharon Stone, Harry Belafonte and Martin Sheen. The original soundtrack by Mark Isham included an orchestra backing up Aretha Franklin. These actors chose to work on the script because of their respect for Bobby, who was assassinated during his run for president. Nixon won, the world lost. Watch it a day or so after *Death of a President*. The story of Bobby's brother John F. Kennedy is also well recorded in Oliver Stone's earlier film *JFK*. Watch all three presidential films to learn about the empire to our south.

The Matrix

I love it for the sheer metaphor of how we all "could" be living in a dream.

V for Vendetta

Based on a great comic book with deep social implications.

The Constant Gardener

Based on John Le Carré's novel, this film exposes how transnational drug companies test experimental drugs on poor illiterate Africans rather than on lab animals in Britain because it is cheaper.

Syriana

Great acting by Alex Baldwin in this film about deceptive oil companies working with their Middle East puppet government use any issue to win at their game.

The Painted Veil

Watch it for the sheer beauty of nature, human drama and romance.

Amazing Grace

Tells how the slave trade was stopped in England. A great study of the MP who was torn between dropping out of politics for spiritual reasons, and the ex-captain of a slave ship who wrote the famous song *Amazing Grace*.

Blood Diamond

DeCaprio's best bad guy role. Find our how diamonds are not a girl's best friend if she lives in a conflict zone where slaves dig diamonds.

On a much lighter note I recommend these delightful yet inspiring movies: ***Stardust***, ***Across the Universe***, and ***The Golden Compass***. There is hope, adventure and intelligence in all these movies.

the new yearth

On our cover, we join the UN in recognizing four distinct designations: International Year of the Potato honours the humble, yet essential, potato, the world's most widely grown tuber crop and daily bread for millions of people. It is also Year of the Reef and we are encouraged to safeguard the health of coral reefs everywhere. Additionally, we celebrate the middle year of the triennium International Year of Planet Earth, which recognizes the Earth Sciences for their contribution in helping us make the Earth a safer and healthier place. And finally, we celebrate the International Year of Languages, a most significant initiative to celebrate unity in diversity.

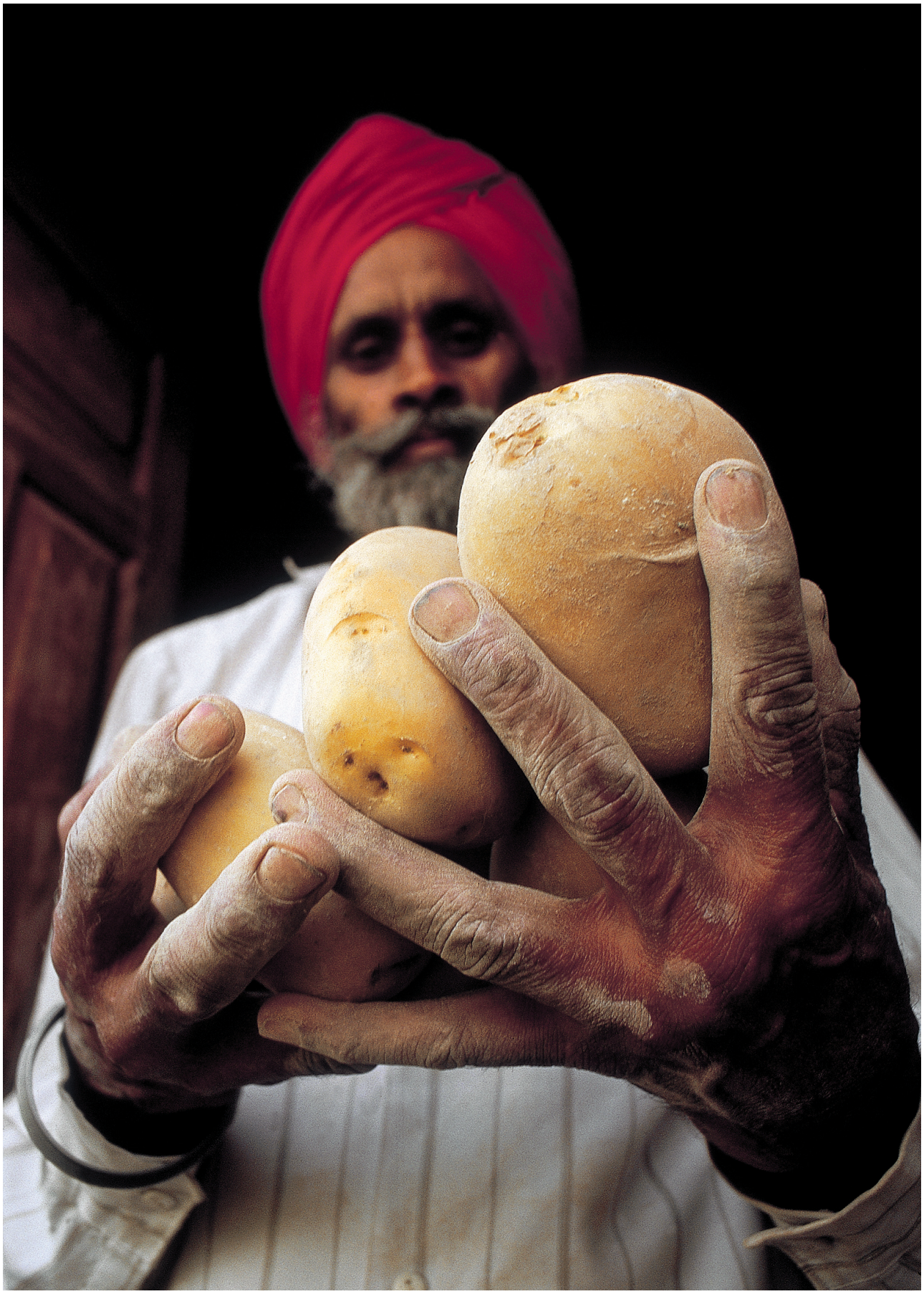


Photo by Alexandro Balaguer courtesy of International Potato Center (www.cipotato.org)

The UN-designated International Year of the Potato (IYP) will raise awareness of the importance of the potato – and of agriculture in general – in addressing issues of global concern, including hunger, poverty and threats to the environment. The mission of the International Year of the Potato is to increase awareness of the importance of the potato as a food in developing nations, and promote research and development of potato-based systems as a means of contributing to the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

Over the next two decades, the world's population is expected to grow on average by more than 100 million people a year. More than 95 percent of that increase will occur in the developing countries, where pressure on land and water is already intense. A key challenge facing the international community is, therefore, to ensure food security for present and future generations, while protecting the natural resource base on which we all depend. The potato will be an important part of efforts to meet those challenges.

The potato has been consumed in the Andes for about 8,000 years. Taken by the Spanish to Europe in the 16th century, it quickly spread across the globe; today, potatoes are grown on an estimated 195,000 square kilometres – 75,000 square miles – of farmland, from China's Yunnan plateau and the subtropical lowlands of India, to Java's equatorial highlands and the steppes of Ukraine. In terms of sheer quantity harvested, the humble potato tuber is the world's number four food crop, with production in 2006 of almost 315 million tonnes (about 347 million US tons). More than half of that total was harvested in developing countries.

The world potato sector is undergoing major changes. Until the early 1990s, most potatoes were grown and consumed in Europe, North America and countries of the former Soviet Union. Since then, there has been a dramatic increase in potato production and demand in Asia, Africa and Latin America, where output rose from less than 30 million tonnes in the early 1960s to almost 120 million tonnes by the mid-1990s. FAO data shows that in 2005, for the first time, the developing world's potato production - some 162 million tonnes - exceeded that of the developed world (156 million

tonnes). China is now the biggest potato producer, and almost a third of all potatoes is harvested in China and India.

Potatoes are rich in carbohydrates, making them a good source of energy. They have the highest protein content (around 2.1 percent on a fresh weight basis) in the family of root and tuber crops, and protein of a fairly high quality, with an amino-acid pattern that is well matched to human requirements. They are also very rich in vitamin C; a single medium-sized potato contains about half the recommended daily intake and one fifth of the recommended daily value of potassium.

World potato production has increased at an annual average rate of 4.5 percent over the last 10 years, and exceeded the growth in production of many other major food commodities in developing countries, particularly in Asia. While potato consumption has declined in Europe, it has increased in the developing world, from less than 10 kg (22 lb) per capita between 1961 and 1963 to almost 22 kg (48.5 lb) in 2003. Consumption of potato in developing countries is still less than a quarter of that in Europe, but all evidence suggests it will increase strongly in the future.

Despite the great increase in global food production over the past half-century, many individuals and communities – mainly in rural areas – do not have physical or financial access to food year round. Under-nourishment places vulnerable people in a downward spiral of bad health that frequently ends in death. By disrupting access to traditional sources of nutrition, HIV/AIDS and social and political conflicts create large groups of at-risk individuals. In addition, many developing countries face a "double burden" of malnutrition: the persistence of under-nutrition, along with a rapid rise in obesity due to unhealthy diets associated with urbanization. The nutrient-rich potato (and sweet potato) can contribute to improved diets, thus reducing mortality rates caused by malnutrition.

Many farm families are caught in a "poverty trap" in which limited livelihood options conspire to keep them poor. Those livelihoods often need either slight or radical reworking to provide consistent income that enables the family to move out of – and stay out of – poverty. Local markets once safe from outside competition now face increased penetration from a wide range of suppliers due to globalization and urbanization. Learning to innovate and engage with markets, and to become more competitive, are challenges for small scale farm families. In order to compete in regional and global markets, they need yield-improving and input-saving technologies to help close the persistent yield and cost gap. IYP can focus global attention on the need to alleviate poverty by increasing incomes and linking farmers to markets.

Most of the world's farms are less than two hectares in size. In sub-Saharan Africa and many parts of Asia, farms are still shrinking and may continue to do so for the next several generations. As farm size shrinks, many farm families are switching from grains and legumes to root and tuber crops to meet subsistence and income goals. Farms with declining area are being managed more and more intensively, leading to soil erosion and ecological imbalances that encourage pest and disease outbreaks. The IYP can focus global attention on solutions for sustainable intensification of farming systems that will stop or reverse the loss of natural resources. *Information reprinted from www.potato2008.org*

When 1997 was declared the International Year of the Reef (IYOR), it was initiated in response to the increasing threats and loss of coral reefs and associated ecosystems, like mangroves and sea grasses. IYOR 97 was a global effort to increase awareness and understanding of coral reefs, and support conservation, research and management efforts. IYOR 97 proved to be very successful, with over 225 organizations in 50 countries and territories participating, over 700 articles in papers and magazines generated, hundreds of scientific surveys undertaken, and catalyzed conservation and policy initiatives, as well as numerous local and global organizations dedicated to coral reef conservation. More information on IYOR 97 can be found at www.publicaffairs.noaa.gov/coral-reef.html

Recognizing that 10 years after IYOR 97 there continues to be an urgent need to increase awareness and understanding of coral reefs, and to further conserve and manage valuable coral reef and associated ecosystems, the International Coral Reef Initiative designated 2008 as the International Year of the Reef (IYOR 2008).

IYOR 2008 will:

• Strengthen awareness about the ecological, economic, social and cultural value of coral reefs and associated ecosystems.

• Improve understanding of the critical threats to coral reefs and generate both practical and innovative solutions to reduce these threats.

• Generate urgent action at all levels to develop and implement effective management strategies for conservation and sustainable use of these ecosystems.

The International Year of Planet Earth aims to capture people's imagination with the exciting knowledge we possess about our planet and to see that knowledge used to make the Earth a safer, healthier and wealthier place for our children and grandchildren.

The International Year of Planet Earth aims to ensure greater and more effective use of the knowledge accumulated by the world's 400,000 Earth scientists. The Year's ultimate goal of helping to build safer, healthier and wealthier societies around the globe is expressed in the Year's subtitle Earth Science for Society. The International Year runs from January 2007 to December 2009 – the central year of the triennium (2008) having been proclaimed by the UN General Assembly as the UN Year. The UN sees the Year as a contribution to their sustainable development targets as it promotes wise (sustainable) use of Earth materials and encourages better planning and management to reduce risks for the world's inhabitants.

The International Year of Planet Earth is a joint initiative by UNESCO and the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS). Twelve founding partners, 26 associate partners and a growing number of international partner organizations from all continents and representing all major geoscientific communities in the world have embarked on this initiative. The Year also enjoys the full political support of 191 UN countries. *Visit http://ess.nrcan.gc.ca/iype_e.php*

The UN has proclaimed 2008 the International Year of Languages, recognizing that genuine multilingualism promotes unity in diversity and international understanding. The UN pursues multilingualism as a means of promoting, protecting and preserving diversity of languages and cultures globally and the Assembly emphasized the paramount importance of the equality of the Organization's six official languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that all language services were given equal treatment and were provided with equally favourable working conditions and resources. The Secretary-General was also requested to complete the task of publishing all important United Nations documents on the Organization's website in all six official languages, on a priority basis.

We wish you peace

Salaam (Arabic), He Ping (Mandarin), Peace (English), Paix (French), Mir (Russian), Paz (Spanish), Sulh (Persian), Hetep (Egyptian), Kutula (South African), Ashtee (Farsi), Rauha (Finnish), Sith (Gaelic), Frieden (German), Irini (Greek), Shanti (Gujarati), Shalom (Hebrew), BekA (Hungarian), Pace (Italian), Heiwa (Japanese), Pokoj (Polish), Pasch (Romansch), Fred (Swedish & Danish), Vrede (Dutch), Lumana (Hausa), Soksang (Khmer), Miers (Latvian), Taika (Lithuanian), Keamana (Malay), Sula (Pustu), Pace (Romanian), Nabad-da (Somali), Sidi (Tibetan), Aman (Urdu), Su Thai Binh (Vietnamese).

Seeing things

by Geoff Olson

Is perception everything?

In the kingdom of the blind, the one-eyed man is king. – Erasmus, 1536

In 2004, a woman in Florida made $28,000 on eBay selling a cheese sandwich that she said bore the image of the Virgin Mary. In July of 1997, a woman in north England sliced open nine aubergines for a curry and was amazed to discover the Hindu symbol for God on every slice. In 1996, just before the Feast of Ramadan, a farmer in Senegal discovered a watermelon upon which the name of Allah had appeared.

When CNN broadcast the stunning photographs of the Eagle nebula from the Hubble space telescope in 1995, many viewers in the US claimed to see the face of Jesus in the glowing columns of interstellar gas. CNN anchors nodded sagely as viewers called in to express their wonderment at this heavenly high-five from the Lamb of God.

Such are miracles in a time of diminished expectations. If you are a Supreme Being with time on your hands, why go to all the effort of parting bodies of water or speaking from a burning bush when you can wow the flock with decorative techniques straight out of *Martha Stewart Living* or move mysteriously through the cable news channels?

Whether it's foodstuffs with a blessed-before date, or messiah-marquees in space, most of us find claims of this sort either amusing or appalling. Magical thinking is for the literalists in the megachurches and *madrasahs*. We, after all, are the educated ones with literate minds that accurately reflect and report on the real world.

If only things were that simple. Even at the best of times, our everyday perception is distorted by temperamental prejudices, unconscious biases and cultural conditioning.

Last year, Ohio Congressman Dennis Kucinich was questioned at a Democratic presidential debate in Philadelphia about a passage in a new book by Shirley MacLaine, who happens to be the godmother of Kucinich's daughter. In *Sage-ing While Age-ing*, MacLaine claims Kucinich saw a UFO above her home in Washington state. "It hovered, soundless, for 10 minutes or so and sped away with a speed he couldn't comprehend. He said he felt a connection in his heart and heard directions in his mind." Moderator Tim Russert quoted MacLaine's description of what Kucinich had seen: "… a gigantic triangular craft, silent, observing him." "Now, did you see a UFO, sir?"

"It was an unidentified flying object, OK? It's, like, it's unidentified," Kucinich replied as laughter rippled through the studio audience. "I saw something."

The Democratic presidential candidate tried to salvage some dignity during this exchange, telling Russert that many Americans have had similar experiences and that former president Jimmy Carter had a UFO sighting of his own. But the damage was done. It's one thing to see religious icons in your lunch. There are folks who will buy that, literally, on eBay. But a UFO over the home of Shirley MacLaine? That's a bit much.

By signing on to a no-win acronym, "UFO" Kucinich was redacted into tabloid territory and prepared for a tinfoil hat fitting by *Fox News*. There was no time available in the 24-hour news cycle to address what the congressman might or might not have actually seen. And although he did not specifically claim he had been taken on a ride on a spacecraft or been anally probed by The Simpsons' drooling, tentacled terrors, Kucinich was now officially the candidate from space.

"UFO" is not a contentless placeholder," noted Jeff Wells, commenting about the Kucinich case in his blog, *Rigorous Intuition* (http://rigint.blogspot.com). "UFO *is* identified with little green men, ET and *Mars Attacks*. There is no meaningful way to speak about the subject in the English language without reference to its debased and comic acronym, and if language shapes our view of reality, then it may take an effort of will or a boundary experience of our own to see that there is more to the phenomenon than a punchline."

American citizens have been seeing things in the skies for a long time and some of the weirdest sightings don't involve space creatures at all. One of the most compelling cases dates back to 1905. As a strange object glided above a field in Dayton Ohio, the general manager of Dayton's rail line and his chief engineer ordered the conductor to stop the train while they and all the passengers on board watched in amazement. Piloting the strange object – one of the world's first flying machines – was a man by the name Orville Wright.

Writes Richard Milton in his book *Alternative Science*: "From December 1903 to September 1908, two young bicycle mechanics from Ohio repeatedly claimed to have built a heavier-than-air flying machine and to have flown it successfully. But despite scores of public demonstrations, affidavits from local dignitaries and photographs of themselves flying, the claims of Wilbur and Orville Wright were derided and dismissed as a hoax by the *Scientific American*, the *New York Herald*, the US army and most American scientists."

The universe continually presents us with quantum "maybes," which our acts of observation collapse into definitive values… If science has taught us anything, the essential nature of the universe is magical – lawful, but magical nonetheless.

It's especially odd considering that Dayton bank president Torrance Huffman had allowed the brothers to use a large tract of farmland he owned for conducting their experiments. A main road and a rail line bordered the land and their flying experiments had been witnessed for years by hundreds, if not thousands, of people.

Respectable society looked the other way. Heavier-than-air flight was deemed impossible by scientists, so there was no necessity to investigate the brothers' claims. Two years after the engineer and his conductor witnessed Orville in his spindly craft, President Theodore Roosevelt ordered public trials at Fort Myers in 1908, to settle the claims once and for all. The Wrights were able to prove their claims with finality, with the army and scientific press accepting their flying machine as a reality.

How could eyewitness observations and the official view of reality been at such variance, prior to Roosevelt's tests? According to Milton, "Many of these bewildered witnesses visited or wrote to the newspapers to ask who were the young men that were regularly flying over "Huffman Prairie" and why nothing had appeared about them. Eventually, the enquiries became so frequent that the papers complained of their becoming a nuisance, but still their editors showed little interest in the story, sending neither a reporter nor photographer."

If that anecdote doesn't say something sobering about the social construction of reality, and the blinkered conservatism of "experts," I don't know what does.

Cut from Kitty Hawk to Chicago's O'Hare Airport a century later, and a sighting so bizarre that the local media sat up and took notice. According to the January 1, 2006, online version of the *Chicago Tribune*, "A flying saucer-like object hovered low over O'Hare International Airport for several minutes before bolting through thick clouds with such intense energy that it left an eerie hole in overcast skies, said some United Airlines employees who observed the phenomenon."

The witnesses described the object as dark grey and well defined in the over-

cast skies. Estimates of the object's size ran from six feet to 24 feet in diameter and viewers noted that it did not display any lights. "It definitely was not an [Earth] aircraft," said one mechanic. A United employee appeared emotionally shaken by the sighting and "… experienced some religious issues" over it, one co-worker said.

The O'Hare report came and went. After a few brief but straightforward reports, the broadcast pundits moved on to the more pressing issues of Paris Hilton and Anna Nicole Smith.

What was seen at O'Hare? In the absence of any scientific data, and any investigative follow-up from the media, we'll likely never know. In any case, it's easy to dismiss an individual report of an aerial anomaly from a congressman or even a president. But it's more difficult to write off a whole group of professionals who see exactly the same disc-shaped object.

Of course, anything from Venus to flocks of geese to temperature inversions are regularly mistaken by intelligent observers for things they are not. Sometimes, mundane objects are magnified into motherships. The bulk of investigated aerial anomalies turn out to have close-to-earth origins. A small percentage are, in the parlance of the air force, "unknowns." It's these reports that give the experts the fits. Toward the end of his tenure as the US air force's official investigator of UFO reports, Cornell astronomer J. Allen Hynek became convinced that a real phenomenon underlay a persistent fraction of "high strangeness" reports from military pilots, airline personnel, air traffic controllers and other professionals.

Once asked where the evidence for genuine UFOs is, Hynek replied, "Where do you want to park the truck?" Yet, to this day, it doesn't matter if nearly two dozen military, intelligence, government, corporate and scientific witnesses come forward at the National Press Club in Washington to present their evidence for UFOs, as they did on Wednesday, May 9, 2001. It doesn't matter if the scientific elite of other nations endorse the existence of UFOs, as France did with the release of the *Cometa Report* in 1999. It doesn't matter that former Canadian defence minister Paul Hellyer, who has had a UFO sighting of his own, has called for an "… era of openness, public hearings, publicly funded research, and education about extraterrestrial reality." In the US, the official line is that we're the only advanced intelligence on or around the planet. Respectable authorities find any alternative ideas idiotic, just as their predecessors did a century earlier.

But I'm more interested in what our reluctance to investigate certain phenomenon, from Kitty Hawk to O'Hare, says about us, rather than an alleged "them." What intrigues me is the politics of perception and how we construct the world "out there." Human beings make perceptual mistakes all the time. We don't just see things that aren't there; we sometimes don't see things that are there, editing them out of consciousness entirely. And we do that with remarkably mundane observations.

There is a famous business training film that shows people in black and white shirts passing a basketball back and forth. Viewers gathered to watch the film are instructed to count the number of times the basketball is passed. As the ball goes around, a figure in a gorilla suit walks into the scene. The figure turns to the camera and beats her chest, before walking off-screen. According to Daniel J. Simons, the psychologist who produced the film, 50 percent of instructed viewers fail to see the figure in the first screening, due to what he calls "inattentional blindness." That's right; half the people viewing the film fail to see a person in a gorilla suit walking across their field of vision.

We often focus on what we're looking for, editing out any anything that doesn't fit in. Through this process, we clever monkeys turn kitchen foodstuffs into religious fetishes or aerial unknowns into locker room jokes. We're all hard-nosed news reporters hunting down a few local stories, while ignoring hundreds of leads for front-page features. In that sense, we're a bit like the newspaper editors in the Wright brothers' time, puffed up with the pride of certainty and refusing to believe we've missed a scoop.

Since we fail to see what's going on, it's no surprise we often fail to hear what's going on as well. On his speaking tours, the late American philosopher Robert Anton Wilson occasionally had his audiences engage in a Sufi listening exercise. After giving out pens and notepads, he asked the people in the auditorium to sit in silence and listen intently, while writing down all the sounds they could hear: distant traffic outside the auditorium, creaking chairs, fabric rustling as people shifted in their seats, etc. When he asked for a show of hands, Wilson found the most sounds heard by any one person came to almost two dozen. He then asked the audience if anyone had heard anything this fellow had not. The author added these sounds to the list, for a total of over forty. Wilson had led this exercise plenty of times before in other talks and this was a consistent score. This proved, he said, that even the most observant person in the room was aware of only half of what was going on.

"Personally, I see two or three UFOs every week," Wilson noted on his website. "This does not astonish me or convince me of the spaceship theory because I also see about two or three UNFOs every week – Unidentified Non-Flying Objects. These remain unidentified (by me) because they go by too fast or look so weird that I never know whether to classify them as hedgehogs, hobgoblins or helicopters, or as stars or satellites or spaceships, or as pizza-trucks or probability waves."

But the world mostly contains mundane things that Wilson could "… identify fully and dogmatically with any norm or generalization." After all this intellectual leg-pulling, the self-described "stand-up philosopher" got to his epistemological punchline: "I live in a spectrum of probabilities, uncertainties and wonderments." Wilson refused to settle on one model for reality. He believed the universe continually presents us with quantum "maybes," which our acts of observation collapse into definitive values.

That sounds more appealing to me than the hard-edged certainties offered by religious or materialist dogmatists. Wilson's attitude toward the big questions is one of humility, awe and humour. And given the truly weird picture of reality drawn by contemporary science, that seems like the right attitude to take.

If you are a Supreme Being with time on your hands, why go to all the effort of parting bodies of water or speaking from a burning bush when you can wow the flock with decorative techniques straight out of Martha Stewart Living or move mysteriously through the cable news channels?

At every moment in space, both inside us and around us, "virtual particles" are popping in and out of existence, according to a variant of Heisenberg's principle. They emerge from the vacuum and return to the vacuum, violating no scientific laws as long as they disappear in a nanosecond. Virtual particles, black holes, pulsars, quarks: collectively, these bizarro objects out-weird the denizens in Star Wars' bar scene, or anything hatched by Disney's "imagineers."

Next to these officially acknowledged oddities, advanced beings visiting us from another world or dimension seem almost redundant. Such things are no more unlikely to me than the subatomic sprites conjured up by particle accelerators. (Not that this gives me any confidence about what Dennis Kucinich saw – especially considering he's not sure what it was himself. On my personal spectrum of believability, the congressman's triangle-shaped object has indeterminate value, although I put it closer to Orville Wright's flying machine than the Virgin Mary's cheese sandwich.)

If science has taught us anything, the essential nature of the universe is magical – lawful, but magical nonetheless. And although we humans are conscious creatures haunted by our imperfection and mortality, our very existence is drawn from this same ground of being. We're the universe embodied as intention, exploring a boundless capacity to create and confound. And Hamlet's words to Horatio still apply. No matter how much knowledge we accumulate, there will always be more things in the heavens and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy.

In *Myth and Meaning*, anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss wrote of his initial shock when he discovered that "a particular tribe" of Indians could see the planet Venus in full daylight with the naked eye. He describes it as "… something that to me would be utterly impossible and incredible." But when he learned from astronomers it was feasible, he concluded, "Today we use less and we use more of our mental capacity than we did in the past."

Most academics would have simply said the Indian tribesmen were "seeing things." In his book *Breaking Open the Head*, Daniel Pinchbeck commented on Levi-Strauss' discovery. "We have sacrificed perceptual capabilities for other mental abilities to concentrate on a computer screen while sitting in a cubicle for many hours at a stretch – something those Indians would find 'utterly impossible and incredible' – or to shut off multiple layers of awareness as we drive a car in heavy traffic. In other words, we are brought up within a system that teaches us to postpone, defer and eliminate most incoming sense data in favour of a future reward. We live in a feedback loop of perpetual postponement. For the most part, we are not even aware of what we have lost."

It may be easy to chuckle at a political candidate who admits to witnessing something above a Hollywood actor's home that he couldn't explain. What's harder for us to accept is that we regularly miss much of what's occurring all around us and within us. As the writer George Leonard put it, "Whatever your age, your upbringing or your education, what you are made of is mostly unused potential." What strange talents, what remarkable powers, still lie latent within us all?

"Seeing things" can mean many things, from looking deeply into the heart of nature to outright hallucination. In the end, our survival on this planetary ship of fools may depend on us learning to see things as they are, rather than what we tell each other they should be.

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Coming of age on the other side of the world

At first glance, *Persepolis*, an animated feature based on the autobiographical works of Iranian born graphic novelist Marjane Satrapi, seems a difficult sell. You can imagine how the elevator pitch might have gone – "Well, it's mostly black and white, 2D animation, set in Iran, in French, with subtitles, er..."

But these same qualities – its bold, monochromatic style and foreign, unfamiliar setting – have worked largely in its favour. *Persepolis*, out January 11, is proving to be a big hit with critics and festival audiences alike.

The story is of a feisty young Iranian girl's coming of age during the overthrow of the Shah and her personal rebellion against the fundamentalist regime that followed. When pressured to conform to the veil-wearing norm of womanhood under Ayatollah Khomeini, Marjane finds her freedom in Bruce Lee films and trading pirate music by the likes of Iron Maiden.

The exuberance of adolescent rebellion, however, gives way to new emotions after her uncle dies senselessly in the Iran-Iraq war and Marjane is sent into exile at a Viennese school for her own safety. There she discovers boys and the alienation and homesickness that come from being trapped in an unfriendly and foreign milieu far away from home.

The stark black and white imagery of the drawings offers atmospheric drama and an uncomplicated intimacy with our flawed and sometimes comical heroine that has struck a chord everywhere. At this year's Vancouver International Film Festival, it picked up the audience award for most popular international film, the New York Film Critics circle recently voted it top animation over Disney/Pixar's mega-budget *Ratatouille* and France entered it as its Best Foreign Language Film at this year's Oscars. (The ceremony takes place February 24.) There was a rumour that an English-dubbed version was in the works, although the animation coming out on the 11th remains in French with English subtitles.

Moving from Iran to Afghanistan, *The Kite Runner* (out now), adapted from Khaled Hosseini's bestseller, is a redemption tale about an émigré's return to Taliban-controlled Afghanistan to aright a terrible betrayal of a friend as a boy 20 years earlier. The emotionally taut film, directed by Marc Forster (*Monster's Ball*), has been noted for top notch performances by an unknown cast and memorable visuals, in particular evocative computer generated images of kites flying.

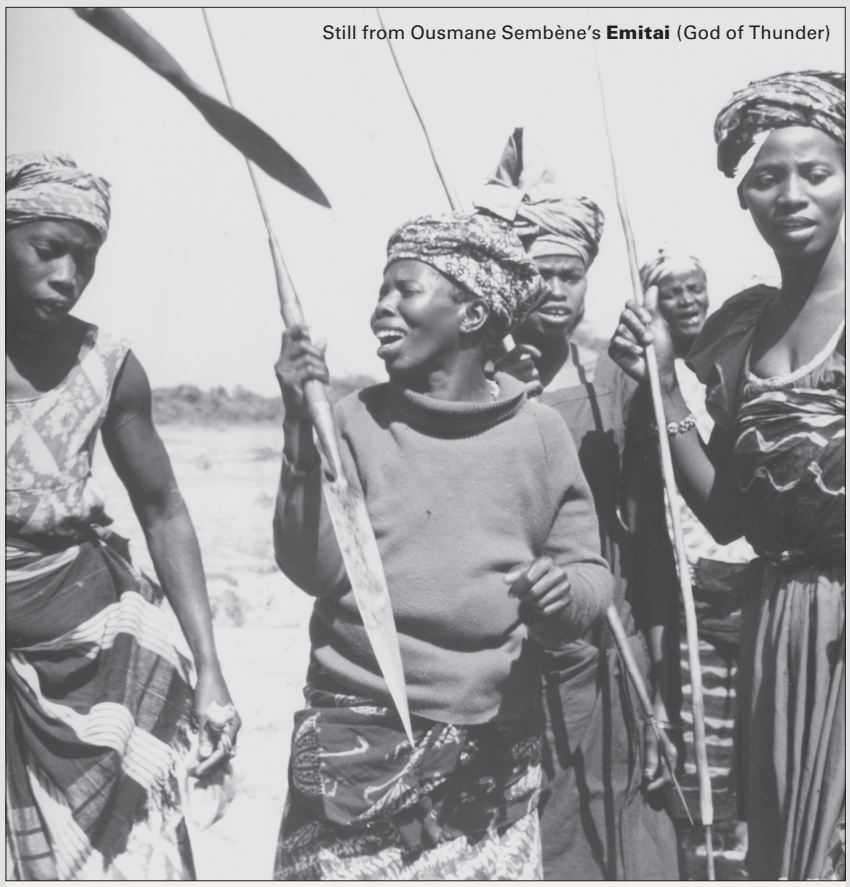
The latest film by Czech director Jan Hrebejk (*Up and Down*, *Divided We Fall*) is another strong domestic drama, with fine performances, also about redemption. In *Beauty in Trouble,* Marcela, the beauty of the title is a young mother who finds herself torn between two men as she tries to look after her asthmatic boy and find some semblance of personal happiness. On the one side, her moody husband chops stolen cars to make ends meet after the family's livelihood was destroyed by the 2002 floods in Prague and on the other is a suave, older, wealthy man, who glides into her life at her time of need like a guardian angel.

Added to the mix, Marcela and her children must deal with an overbearing mother and her creepy boyfriend when they move out of their mold-ridden digs into grandmum's cramped flat. In spite of the odd convenient twist of fate, *Beauty in Trouble* remains very much a character-driven film – and enjoyable for that very reason – where unexpected turns in the plot occur as you become more deeply involved with the characters and their inter-relations. See it at the Vancity theatre from January 14 to 17.

A quick mention of the third Gabriola Film Festival which runs from January 25 to 27 at the Gabriola Community Hall. Among the films is Chinese-Canadian filmmaker Yung Chang's *Up the Yangtze*, which using the Three Gorges Dam project as a backdrop, captures the human face of China on the cusp of radical change from rural economy to Western-style superpower. The film won Best Canadian Documentary award at VIFF. Also showing are *Autism: the Musical*; *Meditate and Destroy*; *The 8th Fire*; *Faro*, *Goddess of the Waters*; *The Castells*; *Faith Without Fear*; *Enemies of Happiness*; *Madame Tutli-Putli* and shorts. More information at www.filmgabriola.com

Cineworks, the Vancouver film and video access centre, recently announced that it is starting a free monthly public discussion and reading group to grapple with cinema's deeper philosophical considerations. *Thought on Film* aims "… to promote critical thought around film product and practice through community-based discussion." The first reading will focus on the first chapter of Gilles Deleuze's *Cinema 1* (January 31, Cineworks Screening Room, 6pm). Visit www.cineworks.ca

Robert Alstead made the Vancouver-set bicycle documentary You Never Bike Alone*, available on DVD at www.youneverbikealone.com*



Still from Ousmane Sembène's **Emitai** (God of Thunder)

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Tickets and info: Call the Starbucks Hotline at 604-683-FILM (3456) for the latest info and listings. Tickets can be purchased in advance online at www.vifc.org or in person 30 minutes before showtime. The Vancity Theatre is offering double bills at $12 for two films, ($10/students and seniors and Bronze and above members). Double Bill pricing is not available for online sales. Tickets: adults, $9.50 (double bill $12), student/seniors, $7.50 (double bill $10), matinees $7.50.

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~ Aristotle ~

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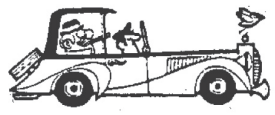

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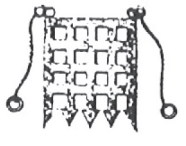

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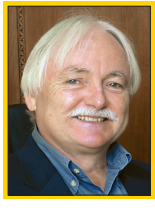

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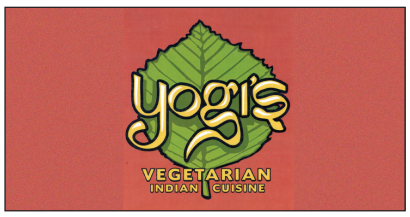

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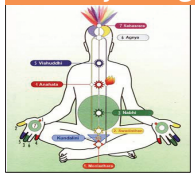
Sahaja Yoga Meditation



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We never know the worth of water 'til the well is dry.

~ Nelson Mandela ~

Belonging cont. from p. 17

For a moment now, purposefully yank yourself out of the circle. Stand at a distance, looking at the circle but no longer inside it. Notice how you feel when you take yourself out and separate yourself. You may feel lonely, separate, left out, invisible or disconnected. Being outside the circle may also feel familiar, while being inside may feel like a wild, unlikely fantasy. If you're used to struggle, ease can feel foreign and you may distrust it at first.

Now come back into the circle and once again make yourself at home in the way that feels best for you. For some, being in the circle may feel like "too much," and you may actually feel more comfortable outside. Honour your own pace. You might begin by moving closer to the circle and just checking it out. Then you might move toward the edge and later step just barely inside. This practice entails finding where you have greatest access to your aliveness, to your endless resources. There's no wrong way to consent to becoming part of the circle. Simply discover what works for you. Just know that you already belong and that your space is always reserved for you, no matter what.

The nature of the circle is flow, so whenever you step into the circle, you step into the flow. When you're out of the circle, separate, you're resisting the flow. Remember: there's no way to earn your way into the circle because you already belong.

Stepping into the circle isn't determined by your worthiness. It depends on your consent. Can you hear a loud chorus right now saying, "Yeah, right, nice fantasy! Now let's get back to the real world, shall we?" Could this be your Do Not Disturb the Comfort Zone alarm going off? Hang on for a moment, now and just check this out. What would it be like if you lived, all the time, as if you already belonged?

Notice that last bit. We're not just consumers in this circle. We are generators, far more ingenious, inspired, and outrageously collaborative than we could have imagined. The circle is enriched because we're in it.

Stepping into the circle isn't determined by your worthiness.

It depends on your consent.

Let's be clear: the circle is not a place. It doesn't have a time zone or a compass point. The circle is a way of being, and we're either being in the circle or being out of the circle. Most of us have thoroughly embodied a way of being outside of the circle. I did. It was from this vantage point that I discovered the circle. I kept seeing this other reality in the distance and I kept wondering what you had to do to be eligible to get in. It couldn't possibly be open to everyone. It couldn't possibly be open to me. I was raised on a common assortment of mantras: "There's not enough. Settle for less. Wait your turn. Fight like hell for what you want."

No matter which of these phrases I chose, there was an implied atmosphere of competition and combat, of domination and intimidation. To dominate or intimidate, it's necessary to create a sense of scarcity. Of course, my parents' objective was not to dominate or intimidate me, though there were surely times they would have welcomed help subduing their unruly offspring. They were doing their best to prepare me for what they believed were the harsh realities of life, to toughen me up so I could survive in a world of scarcity and struggle.

Not enough thinking keeps us in survival mode, our reptilian brain on constant alert, scanning for threats, preparing to attack or defend. Not enough thinking preempts our higher brain functions, the ones that inspire us to innovate and cooperate.

Now here's where the Trance gets tricky. If we believe that being separate is the way to be safe, then we'll create distance between ourselves and others; we'll refuse to count on anyone; we'll isolate ourselves. There are two corners into which we can wedge ourselves so that we remain separate. Both of them are inauthentic due to the fact that we're hardwired to relate to and connect with life. In one corner we can decide to be a victim. Our theme song becomes "You done me wrong just like I always knew you would." In the other corner we can decide to be a hero or a martyr. Whichever corner we stand in – victim or hero/martyr – we're operating out of separation.

Preparing for struggle perpetuates struggle

Let's go back to the circle now. Remember: no one can keep you out but you. There's no fence, no gate, no ticket taker. No one but you can take yourself out of the circle and most of us do so hundreds of times a day. To get out quickly, here are several accelerated routes: I'm not enough. There is not enough. This can never work. It's impossible. It's too late. Nobody cares. It's too hard. I don't deserve it. I don't belong. Accelerated routes out of the circle can also take these forms: shallow or no breathing, slumped shoulders, furrowed brow, tense neck, clenched jaw and collapsed chest. Whether you leave the circle by way of internal messages or by way of physical constriction, the result is the same. Scarcity and struggle take hold.

Whenever we constrict the flow of life force by clenching our bodies or by telling ourselves limiting stories, we are practising separation rather than belonging and that takes us out of the circle. When we feel stingy, judgmental, defeated, self-righteous or victimized, we've stepped out of the circle. When we open up, relax and join in, we have stepped into the circle and we experience the warmth and delight of being in the flow. So, you may be saying, if there are accelerated routes out of the circle, there must also be a quick way or two of getting back in. And indeed, this is the case. It's a very short list: Give your consent.

This is all that's required to come back into the circle – only your consent. The Latin root word for consent, *consentire*, means to join with feeling. Perfect, isn't it? We experience being either in or out of the circle according to how we feel, how we are, according to what we say is so.

Choosing to belong in the circle is an act of sovereignty. We belong because we choose to belong. We don't force or demand it because that would mean we were still playing the eligibility game. Consent is simply accepting our place in the flow of life. It's a choice made from moment to moment. So here's the practice: whenever you notice you've stepped out of the circle, consent to come back in.

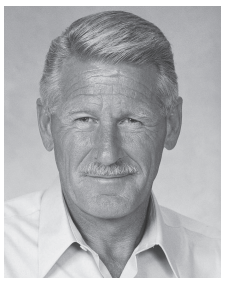
Taking your place in the circle means belonging to the flow of all life, joining with it, drawing on its juice and vitality and making your own contribution to it. Stepping into the circle means hooking up your individual life force with a life force much bigger than yours – the life force that moves and fuels all things.

The circle is only one image, of course. If it's useful to you, great. If it's distracting, find an image that works better for you. Why did I choose a circle and not a river, you ask? Because, like the cycle of abundance, the flow constantly replenishes itself.

Excerpted from The Trance of Scarcity: Stop Holding Your Breath and Start Living Your Life *by Victoria Castle, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., www.bkconnection.com*

MasterPath

THE TEACHINGS OF LIGHT AND SOUND



Sri Gary Olsen, Spiritual Leader of MasterPath

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— Sri Gary Olsen

CONVENTIONAL APPROACH	UNIVERSAL APPROACH
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External worship of saints	Realizing your own sainthood
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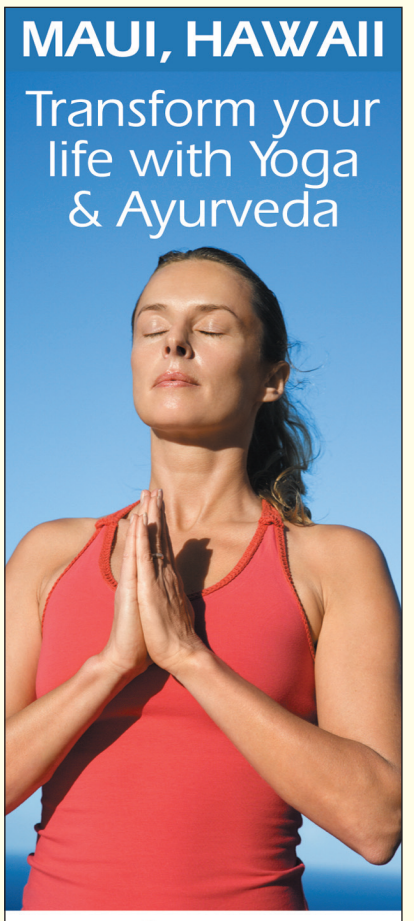

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JAN 12-13
Sidney Health Fair: 100 practitioners, including wellness specialist Dr. Carolyn DeMarco on healthy living, osteoporosis. Naturopath Karen Paquette discusses "...Unleashing Sexier, Healthier You." 250-655-0515, www.siwc.org/healthfair

JAN 13
"Transformation of Man" Series: Tape 1 of 7 with J. Krishnamurti-philosopher, Dr. Bohm-physicist, Dr. Shainberg-psychiatrist. 4pm, open dialogue 5:30-7:30. MacMillan Planetarium lounge. Donation. Jeb 604.734.7774.

JAN 18-20
Foot Reflexology Introduction commences certificate weekend course. Intro: $10, Course $325. Pacific Institute of Reflexology, (604) 875-8818, www.pacificreflexology.com

JAN 18, 22, 23, 25-27
Reginald A. Ray, Ph.D free public lectures & workshop: in the tradition of the great siddha Chogyam Trungpa, Rinpoche. Info & registration www.dharmaocean.org

JAN 22
Planetary Peace Meditation: Join us for this powerful meditation held on the full moon, at 7:30pm* (*PH clinic open 6-7pm) 2950 Laurel St, Vancouver. www.pranichealing.ca/vancouver

JAN 22
Introductory session by The Brotherhood of Humanity. A simple, honest, and true worldwide activity. Tuesday 7:30pm. Burnaby Metrotown, Bob Prittie Library Meeting Room, 6100 Willingdon Ave. Info: (604) 298-2231, (604) 430-1882, (604) 986-5042.

JAN 27
Environmentalist and activist Tzeporah Berman's talk & Q&A: Who Will Repair It? 7:30pm, $12, Norman Rothstein Theatre, Jewish Community Centre, 950 W. 41st Ave., 604-257-5199 www.jewishmuseum.ca

FEB 1-3
Vancouver Society of Storytelling 2008 Storyfeast: Tickets at www.ticketstonight.ca, 604-231-7535. See lineup at www.vancouverstorytelling.org

FEB 1-3
Advanced Reflexology Professional Skills Courses: Course $325. Pacific Institute of Reflexology, (604) 875-8818, www.pacificreflexology.com

FEB 9-10
Women's Mid-Life Transitions Workshop, Vancouver. Mid-life review to help identify what you want in life NOW, Centre for Peace, $350, Register www.wearechrysalisworks.com or 604-733-0560.

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International Spiritualist Alliance: #201-317 Columbia Street, New West, 604-521-6336. Sunday services, 11am. Rev. Joyce Tarvin, 604-433-6663, www.isacanada.ca. See Resource Directory ad.

SOS (Science of Spirituality) Eco Centre: Enjoy free silent meditation, spiritual discourse & lunch. 10am Meditation, 11am Discourse. 604-277-1247, 11011 Shell Road @ Steveston Hwy (between #5 & #4 Road) Richmond. All Welcome. www.sos.org

Unity of Vancouver: Empowering people to create prosperity, health and loving relationships through the practical application of spiritual principles. Sunday Services 11AM, 5840 Oak St., Vancouver (604) 266-6281.

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TUESDAYS

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New Address: Free Geek Monthly Meeting, second Tues. of every month, 6:30-8:30pm, NEW HOME: 1820 Pandora St. Join in developing a non-profit dedicated to computer recycling, education & free software. www.freegeekvancouver.org

WEDNESDAYS

Speaking Circles: Learn to speak naturally in front of groups, transforming anxiety into the excitement of creative expression through relational presence. 7:30-9:30pm, Dave 604-488-9203.

Hawaiian Medicine Circle: 7 pm. Hawaiian guided meditation, Sharing the Aloha, tea and snacks afterwards with like-minded people. $10 donation. At Hale Ola, a place of Healing, 1215 Madison Ave., Burnaby. 604-431-7474. Call Kumu Kaimana.

Children of War fundraiser: Chai Gallery at East is East hosts a fundraiser for Children of War, featuring local musicians & traditional dancers. Every Wed. evening, 7:30pm – 1:30am, 3243 W. Broadway. $25/door or call 778-837-1862, www.thechildrenofwar.org.

New Address: LINUX Clinic & Windowsless Wednesdays: Every Wed. 7-9:30pm, Free Geek, NEW HOME: 1820 Pandora. www.freegeekvancouver.org Meetings resume Jan. 7.

FRIDAYS

"Destiny Dialogues" Free Talks (7-9 pm). First Friday of each month, experiential evening that explores the inter-connections between destiny and: suffering, relationships, vocations, joy, teachers, character, nature, family, dreams. Call Michael 604-317-1613 to RSVP.
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St. George's, 2950 Laurel St. (at 14th)
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Certified Pranic Healer

seminars

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Jan 20th, Sunday
$350 + text $43

Psychic Self Defense
Feb 9th - 10th
$350 + text $43

Soul Realization
Feb 23rd - 24th
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at 604.921.6981 or jmierau@telus.net

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Holistic Medicine in Africa: Organized Medicine Foundation (OMF) helps people in rural Africa using naturopathy/homeopathy/acupuncture. Can you help? Donations welcome. www.organizedmedicine.org or ameet@organizedmedicine.org

Do you have an eating disorder and need support? Support group run by eating disorder survivor and nurse. edgroup_char@hotmail.com Groups held in Langley.

Scent-free Spaces: If you have health reactions to scents or fragrances, please go to the website www.scentsitive.ca. It is about creating scent-free spaces in Vancouver.

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Unitarian Fellowship of Kelowna www.unitariancongregation.org/kelowna/
The Unitarian Fellowship of Salt Spring Island unitariancongregation.org/saltspring/
First Unitarian Church of Victoria www.victoriaunitarian.ca
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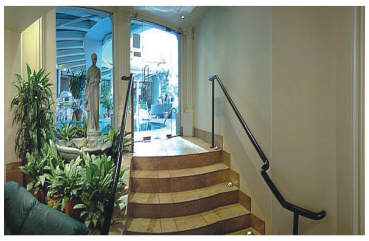

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On Track Zodiac

JANUARY 2008 Adrien Dilon

ARIES (Mar 21 – Apr 19)
You might find all kinds of opportunities to unleash your silent power. With your need for speed, January lends itself to your wilful engagement of charisma and disarming charm. You invite any apparent adversity; you are excited by the art of it.

TAURUS (Apr 20 – May 21)
Carry the staff of wisdom into the New Year. You are in a position of authority even if you don't recognize it. Educating while conveying wisdom, you support and lift others. You are the messenger with a pipeline to special insights.

GEMINI (May 22 – Jun 20)
The twins may want to keep a low profile. You might also want to recharge your mind and spirit as you recapitulate the passing flurry of activity and its consequences. Soothing and stilling your mind is needed as the following year brings immense changes. Boost your system as you raise your vibration.

CANCER (Jun 21 – Jul 22)
Will you feel threatened when new technology usurps your plans for traditional ways and means? As Pluto enters an opposition to your secure Cancerian modes of behaviour, you may find it challenging to stay hermetic and hidden. However, you may find you don't have to work particularly hard now as fortune smiles upon you.

LEO (Jul 23 – Aug 22)
Trust and loyalty are forefront in your business and personal affairs. Being in a leading position, you might try to eliminate anyone in your workplace who doesn't have your vision. Chances are if disloyalty is an issue, you will clear the slate here and now.

VIRGO (Aug 23 – Sep 22)
You have really come into your own and may be awarded in some way. Whether you decide to remain in the background working behind the main event or to shine front and centre, it's a whole new ball game. Share what you cherish.

LIBRA (Sep 23 – Oct 22)
If your mind is ravaged by fear, it could undermine your potential. Opportunity knocks on those secret doors you may have locked behind you. Breakthrough times are ahead and you could make quantum leaps in your progress. You will learn to find your spiritual backbone.

SCORPIO (Oct 23 – Nov 21)
A soft word could turn away wrath. Learn to walk away from potent situations and events that have the potential to become hurtful. So much energy is yours now that you could become overwhelmed. Energy can be turned into useful power; such is your gift now to transmute and discover your personal alchemy.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22 - Dec 21)
If making your living is a humourless matter, it's time to let the lighter side of your nature conduct you. Mars is going counter to the forward direction and you could find your experiences somewhat constricting with serious overtones. Perhaps explode with paint on a canvas instead of delivering a sharp-tongued dialogue.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22 - Jan 19)
This is a revolutionary time as Pluto enters your sign. Near the end of the month, a waxing of new energy will be felt. Anything arresting your development will simply be blown to bits in your universe and liberate you in ways not felt in decades. Self reliance brings success.

AQUARIUS (Jan 20 – Feb 19)
There are a courageous few who can withstand major obstacles and you have the inherent quality to be dauntless. You may need these characteristics in the next while. Travel might abate some of the intensity. It certainly will comfort you to take in new sights and sounds.

PISCES (Feb 20 – Mar 20)
Tread softly amid the noise and turmoil. Witness any turbulence around you without aligning with it. Create more gentle places and expand your desire for solitude. Find your inner sanctum. Glide through with inner strength.

Adrien Dilon is a clairvoyant consultant and author with 33 years of experience in astrology, multi-media art and healing, adrien.dilon@gmail.com, members.shaw.ca/adrien.dilon

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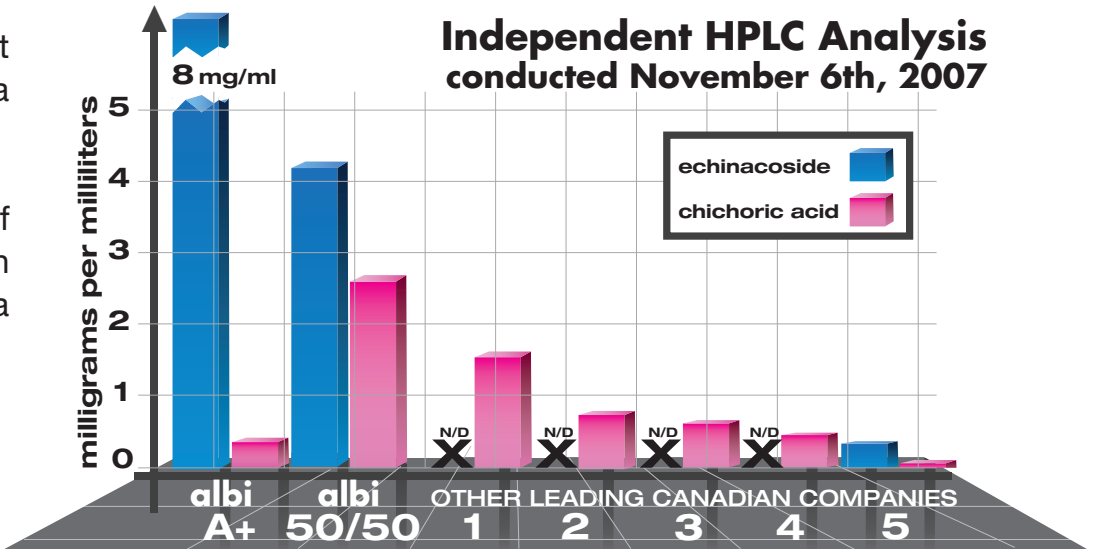

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echinacoside	8.23	4.23	N/D	N/D	N/D	N/D	0.34
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Standardized	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO

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